DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 392 668 SO 025 539

AUTHOR	Leder, Priscilla, Comp.; And Others
TITLE	Essays from the Edge: Citizenship and the Outsider in Literature and History.
INSTITUTION	Southwest Texas State Univ., San Marcos.
SPONS AGENCY	National Endowment for the Humanities (NFAH), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	92
NOTE	234p.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Collected Works - General (020)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC10 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Authors; Books; Citizen Role; *Citizenship; Citizenship Responsibility; Classical Literature; *Community Attitudes; English Literature; Essays; Foreign Countries; Foreign Nationals; *History; Humanities; Immigration; *Literature; Political Attitudes; *Renaissance Literature; Social Responsibility
IDENTIFIERS	*Greece

ABSTRACT

This book of essays and poetry by participants in a National Endowment for the Humanities summer seminar explores the portrayal in arts and literature of the "outsider" or "alien" who is cut off from country and citizenship, either by choice or circumstance. The book is divided into seven categories. Part 1, "Preliminary," contains: (1) "Citizenship on the Highway and the High Seas" (Susan Hanson); and (2) "Baptism" (Daniel Stevens). Part 2, "Classical Greece," includes: (1) "Ode to the Men of Athens" (Deborah Seigman); (2) "Voices of Warning: The Role of the Chorus in 'Antigone'" (Susan Farris); (3) "Acting Beyond the Myth of the Citizen" (Phil Cook); and (4) "Sophrosyne in 'Antigone': Women, Family and Government" (Danette Bermea). Part 3, "The Renaissance," includes: (1) "'That Perfect Hatred': Anti-Semitism and the Banality of Evil in Shakespeare's 'The Merchant of Venice'" (Jim McGarry); (2) "The More You Know, The Moor You May Not Know" (Carey Christenberry); and (3) "The Silken Shield of Innocence" (Deborah Seigman). Part 4, "The Social Contract," includes: (1) "Obligations of the Individual Inside and Outside the Social Contract" (Karl Kevin Brown); and (2) "Slavery's Influence on the American Definition of Citizenship" (Amy Nelson Thibaut). Part 5, "Huckleberry Finn," includes: (1) "Huck, a Good Ol' Boy" (Dona Holloway); (2) "Deceit and Democracy: Huckleberry Finn as a Disturbing Presence" (Beverly Webster); and (3) "Go With the Flow" (Sandy Watts). Part 6, "Beloved," contains: (1) "She Haunts Me" (Paula Moeller); (2) "Beloved and Christian Citizenship: An Augustinian Analysis of Sethe and Stamp Paid" (Bill Gardiner); (3) "The Right of Dissent: Beloved's Baby Suggs and Sethe" (Kathryn Dierksen); (4) "Nobody Stopped Playing Checkers" (Teri Holmes); (5) "The Alienation Factor: Displacement Leading to Violence in 'Beloved'" (Millie Goode); (6) "The Meaning of Life" (Karl Kevin Brown); (7) "The Patchwork Quilt and Feminist History in 'Beloved'" (Cynthia Walling); and (8) "Outside the Outside: A Comparison of Walker's Maggie and Morrison's Denver" (Daniel Stevens). Part 7, "L'Envoi," contains: (1) "From the Shadows" (Millie Goode); and (2) "Bruce Mitty" (Carey Christenberry). (EH)

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Essays From the Edge

Citizenship and the Outsider in Literature and History

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Essays From the Edge
Citizenship and the Outsider in Literature and History

By the Participants in
Defining Ethical Citizenship
The Political Outsider in Literature and History

A Summer Institute Sponsored by
The National Endowment for the Humanities
and the Department of English
at
Southwest Texas State University
July 13-August 7, 1992

Institute Director
Dr. June Hankins

Compiled and Edited by
Dr. Priscilla Leder
Ms. Debbie Escamilla
Ms. Lovell White

Through the Office of
The SWT Faculty Advancement Center
Dr. Gerald Farr, Director

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Citizenship on the Highway and the High Seas

About one hundred miles into my northbound trip back to San Marcos, I was abruptly brought back into the here and now by the immediate slowing of the procession of cars. My thoughts had been centered on simple, happy events surrounding my visit with family and friends at home. Instead of the usual cursory glance and wave at the Sarita checkpoint for drugs and illegal aliens, I was required to come to a complete stop and declare my citizenship! I realized that my vacation was over, and I began to consider what became of those who were unable to answer the citizenship question correctly. Images of the (detention) center along with the stories told by aliens instantly flooded my mind. Once it has been determined that an alien is merely in the United States hoping for a chance at a better pay scale and is not a political refugee, he is packed up and taken back across the border. In reality it is not quite that simple. While being "processed," he is searched and all belongings are taken from him. Anything of value becomes "lost," since it never existed. This stealing by officials is justified because no alien could possibly come by any money or other valuable through legal means because undocumented aliens are not allowed to work in the United States. Once back in Mexico, he simply removes what he has left, ties everything into a bundle, and wades or swims back across the Rio Grande. At this point, he has very little to lose and everything to gain. He will just be a little more cautious the next time he decides to go further north. An "illegal" once told me that the kindest gift a United States citizen had ever given him was swimming lessons.

Once this cycle has been completed a number of times, the alien may decide that staying close to the border is the safest bet, and he has heard that the earnings on a shrimp boat can be amazing. He then talks his way into becoming a crew member and spends three to six weeks out at sea. When the time comes to return with the catch, the crew occasionally will do some quick calculations and determine that they each will have a larger cut if there are fewer with whom to divide the profits. Since, for all practical purposes, the alien was never on the boat because it is against the law to hire him, he is dropped overboard. Several days later his bloated, unidentifiable body washes up on the beach. One wonders whether his family back home ever learns his fate.

Every two or three years one reads in the paper of a shrimp boat captain who does not come in with the crew. The story generally goes like this: He was checking the TED (turtle excluder device) and somehow got tangled in the nets and fell overboard, and since he could not swim (amazing, but many can't), he was lost. We all wonder how many crew members he pushed over before he got his. In any event, the family of the captain begins to file lawsuits against every governmental agency that is in charge of the regulation and enforcement of the use of TEDS.

Now, back in San Marcos, how does this all fit in? If these were just fantastic stories that may have occurred, then we could dismiss this highly unethical treatment of illegal aliens; however, the bodies wash up two or three times a year, and aliens are "processed" and deported daily.

As we read and discuss the various selections for the seminar, we are constantly reminded that the characters are extremists who have lost touch with the harmonious "middle ground." The avarice that drives the citizens today to take advantage of outsiders is just as extreme as any passion that drove the fictional characters we have encountered.

Susan Hanson

Baptism

Sometimes I feel the rhythm of the words.
Sometimes the melody that moans with meaning I hear but can't
apprehend.
Down, down, through the history of senses, ideas, empathies descend I me down,
down, down.
A lightless plasma dissolves this barrier, my skin, reaches deep into
me, circumscribes my senses, touches, surrounds each ecstatic
nerve directly, down
Down, down to the essential core that itself dissolves in the ecstatic
pool of charged existence.
Aye! Me!
These words, these essential words escape, or they play rivulet rings
around my apprehension, they coquette me, druids encircling
I me chanting the profound.
I know what they mean! Where is it? Where is it in me?
I want to dip in that pool—the baptism—emerge dripping sparkling
drops of the lightless pool then drops of light.

Daniel Stevens

Classical Greece

Ode To The Men Of Athens —A Poem

Ode on the Disintegration of the Polis (in response to the Lecture on "From Polis to Cosmopolis: Greek and Roman Conceptions of Citizenship")

O Men of Athens! A blight is on our land!
Our precious polis withers even as it bears succulence.
The dressers desert the vineyards to satisfy their sensibilities,
leaving the fruit to drop and spoil or to be plucked to fill
the maws of the barbarians.

Gobbling the sweet pulp, politicians grow sleek
as the seditious sophists whisper wooing words.
Disdaining debate, incipient heroes seek seclusion
and drown the joys of regeneration.
Their latent paternity pleads to them to plow and plant,
but they save their seeds selfishly.
Some stroll, fondling art and listening to languorous lutes
as they define the indefinite and pander to pederasty,
lovers that yield not.

Who, then, shall rescue us from this arid plain?
Must our souls' hunger drag us back to the fertile fields?
Plow under the decaying vine to enrich the sterile earth!
Prune the dormant branch to seek the sun!
Moderation and duty shall water the roots of Athens
until it flaunts the verdant flags of growth once more.

(Then again, maybe a war's not such a bad idea, after all.)

Deborah Seigman

Voices of Warning:
The Role of the Chorus in *Antigone*

Sophocles' play *Antigone* is named for Antigone, the daughter of Oedipus, who has wandered with her father in exile. After her brothers have fulfilled their father's prophecy that each would kill the other in a civil war, Creon has risen to power. The play begins with Creon's first day as ruler. He has been given the task of restoring order to his country of Thebes. He must also engage the community in supporting his decisions. However, the voices of that community (expressed through the chorus, Haemon, and Tiresias), reveal a growing resentment and horror about Creon's decisions. By the end of the play, the chorus acknowledges that Creon was justly punished for not listening to the views of others and ignoring a higher law of the gods.

We learn about Creon's first cruel edict from Antigone in the opening scene. Antigone explains to her sister Ismene that Creon will not allow Polynices to be buried because he is a traitor to Thebes. Ismene replies that they have no power against state law since they are powerless women. Antigone tells Ismene that she will continue on her way to sanctify Polynices's body in burial rites, even though "Whoever disobeys in the least will die, his doom is sealed: / stoning to death inside the city walls!" (41-42).

After Antigone and Ismene leave, the touchstone of the community arrives in the form of the Greek chorus. They are happy with the defeat of Thebes' enemy, "but now for Victory! / Glorious in the morning . . . " In the BBC production of *Antigone*, directed by Don Taylor, Creon strides into the hall wearing a close-fitting military uniform and a short haircut. He poses near his enormous portrait and tells the assembled chorus that just as they have been loyal to the royal blood kings Laius and Oedipus who preceded him, so should the community accept him as ruler ". . . as I am next in kin to the dead, / I now possess the throne and all its powers" (192-93).

In a chilling, fascist tone, Creon says "the state, the fatherland is everything to us." Creon explains that he must be above individual interests. What Creon is leading up to is a justification for denial of Polynices' burial. That outcast invaded Thebes at the head of a foreign army and thirsted "to drink his kinsmen's blood and sell the rest to slavery . . . " Creon says that he shall be denied burial or mourning.

The decaying body would inspire terror and serve as an example "for people who commit crimes against the state" (BBC Production).

At this point, the chorus, wearing black mourning suits, accepts Creon's edict. The leader of the chorus says "If this is your pleasure, Creon, treating our city's enemy . . . this way . . . The power is yours . . . " (235). The chorus needs the stability of a strong ruler and a unified state; contradicting Creon won't serve any purpose.

However, we hear the first note of doubt from the chorus after a sentry who is guarding Polynices' body reports to Creon. He is frightened to see Polynices' body scattered with dust, which signifies a burial rite. On hearing this, the leader of the chorus suggests doubt in the wisdom of Creon's edict by saying, "My king, ever since he began I've been debating in my mind, / could this possibly be the work of the gods?" (314-15). Arrogantly, Creon retorts, "You, you're senile, ... why it's intolerable—say the gods could have the slightest concern for that corpse?" (319).

At Antigone's trial, the voice of the community is heard in the form of the chorus. When Ismene pleads for Antigone's life by saying, "What? You'd kill your own son's bride? (641), the chorus is appalled by Creon's decision to break off her marriage to Haemon. The leader of the chorus says, "So it's settled then? Antigone must die?" (648). Mournfully, the chorus says that the characteristics of Oedipus, which are arrogance and sorrow, are being passed down to Creon. "One generation cannot free the next" (670). The turning point in the play comes when the chorus affirms the higher laws of the gods over the wishes of the state as led by Creon. "Yours is the power . . . your law prevails" (678). Foreshadowing Creon's mortal mistake in condemning Antigone to death, the chorus laments, "Sooner or later / foul is fair, fair is foul / to the man the gods will ruin. (696-98).

We hear from Creon's son Haemon the displeasure of the city as Haemon pleads for Antigone's life.

> But it's for me to catch the murmurs in the dark,
> the way the city mourns for this young girl.
> "No woman," they say, "ever deserved death less,
> and such a brutal death for such a glorious action.
> She, with her own dear brother lying in his blood—
> she couldn't bear to leave him dead, unburied,
> food for the wild dogs or wheeling vultures.
> Death? She deserves a glowing crown of gold!"
> So they say, and the rumor spreads in secret,
> darkly (775-84).

Haemon entreats his father to value the opinions of others, learn to listen, and change his mind. "Oh give way. Relax your anger—change!" (804). At this point, the chorus' leader affirms Haemon's advice, "You'd do well, my lord, if he's speaking to the point / to learn from him . . . " (810). In a rage, Creon accuses Haemon of being Antigone's accomplice, and sends for Antigone so that Haemon can watch her and Ismene die. The chorus leader asks incredulously, "Both of them, you really intend to kill them both?" (866).

The chorus begins to see Creon as a despot worthy of being overthrown. Before Antigone is led to her entombment, the chorus says, "But now, even I would rebel against the king, / I would break all bonds when I see this . . . " (895). Antigone, sensing the sympathy of her community toward her, pleads her case and says that she is victimized by an unjust law. She hopes that "you at least, you'll bear me witness . . . " (937). Unfortunately, the chorus at this point tells her, "Your own blind will, your passion has destroyed" (962). This statement also foreshadows what they will be telling Creon at the end of the play when his blind will has destroyed everyone he loves. For both Antigone and Creon, their intractable wills cause their downfalls. Antigone can't begin to understand the chorus, and her heartrending reply is that she has no friends and no one to weep for her. (Has she forgotten about Haemon?) Then she says that others will justify her actions—her family. "But still I go, cherishing one good hope: / my arrival may be dear to father . . . my mother . . . my loving brother Eteocles . . . But now, Polynices, because I laid your body out as well, this, this is my reward" (985-86). Her ties to her deceased family are stronger than to a future family or state.

Cruelly, Creon says that she shouldn't comfort herself by hope since there is none. Creon does not fear vengeance of the gods at this point. In the BBC production, Antigone says that she is the last of the royal blood of her family to die "unjustly for holding up the humanity of man" and for reverence for the gods. As Antigone is led away, the chorus ominously says that the gods determine fate, and the gods punish kings.

Creon wouldn't heed the warnings of either the chorus or Haemon, but the words of the seer Tiresias strike terror in his heart. His prophecies have hit the mark too many times. Tiresias says that the blood and flesh of Polynices affront both the citizens and the gods. The gods won't accept the sacrifices of Thebes since the city is polluted by Polynices' body. "And it is you— / your high resolve that sets this plague on Thebes" (123-24). Tiresias, in the BBC Production, counsels Creon to rescind his order. "No one will condemn a man who admits his mistakes. You can kill a man once. There is no glory in defeating a corpse."

Still, Creon is slow to get the message. He says that all of them disagree with him for self-interest and profit. Until Tiresias tells his dreadful secret that both Antigone and Polynices have been wronged and that the Furies lie in wait for him, Creon won't admit that he is wrong. Tiresias has told him, "... the avengers ... now lie in wait for you, ... to strike you down with the pains that you perfected!" (119).

In a panic, Creon asks advice of the leader of the chorus. "What should I do? Tell me ... I'll obey" (223). Creon listens to what the leader requests: free the girl and bury Polynices' body. Tragically, Creon is too late to save Antigone, who has hung herself inside her tomb of a cave. Also, to his anguish, Creon finds Haemon cradling Antigone's body. When Creon pleads with his son to leave the cave, Haemon spits in his face and lunges at Creon with his sword. Haemon misses and then "desperate with himself, / suddenly leaning his full weight on the blade" kills himself (1362-63). The chorus hears of this tragedy and tells Creon, "Too late, / too late, you see what justice means" (1400-01). For the chorus, justice involves listening to the views of others. The chorus cannot support Creon because he breaks a taboo: not affording dignity to a dead man, regardless of who he is. This is what Creon cannot do; therefore, he must pay the price. Sophocles may have been warning his audience of a similar fate if Athens wouldn't allow its enemies to bury their dead with honors.

Creon has experienced too late the pain and suffering that Antigone has endured. "Oh I've learned through blood and tears! Then, it was then, / when the god came down and struck me—a great weight / shattering, driving me down that wild savage path, / ruining, trampling down my joy" (1401-04). In the BBC Production, Creon says, "Suffering is the god's schoolteacher." Unfortunately, Creon has more to learn with the suicide of his wife Eurydice. The chorus leader says, "Then with her dying breath she called down / torments on your head—you killed her sons" (1430-31).

In agony, Creon admits, "And the guilt is all mine ... Take me away, quickly, out of sight. / I don't even exist—I'm no one. Nothing" (1445-46). Because Creon has not listened to the voices of his community in the forms of the chorus, Haemon, and Tiresias, he ends up with no one—no community. In the BBC Production, Creon, now alone, says, "Let darkness hide me." We are left with the warning of the chorus that the key to happiness is in nurturing wisdom by standing in awe of the supernatural.

In the play *Antigone,* we have seen an old man, through suffering, become wise. I hope that students, in studying *Antigone*, will learn that part of being an ethical citizen is to listen to the views of others.

Susan Farris

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Acting Beyond the Myth of the Citizen

Citizenship is based in practicality. It is an idea, an abstraction. In its pure form, it is part of a system of myth, that which is taken as "real" at a particular time by a culture, that functions to secure for the individual certain advantages, including protection from outsiders, and integrity, order, and stability within the state. The price paid by the individual for these advantages is a restriction of will and personal subjugation to the collective. The personal quest, the pursuit of other myths, is not completely forbidden by the myth of citizenship, but there are limits and parameters beyond which the quest cannot be pursued without running afoul of the state. The primary limitation placed upon the individual by the myth of citizenship is the acceptance of the proposition that the good of the state is more important than the welfare of the citizen, or of that of groups of citizens, such as families, clans, tribes, etc. Creon clearly expresses the justification for this proposition when he asserts:

> Remember this:
> our country *is* our safety.
> Only when she voyages true on course
> can we establish friendships, truer than blood itself. (210-13)

The problem with the myth of citizenship is that it is narrow, lacking dimension, and provides an adequate medium neither for the existence of a culture, a much more complex entity, nor for the broad and intricate aspirations of the human governed by the state—the citizen. There is a constant friction between the requirements of the state and those of the culture within which the state exists, as well as those of the state's citizens, resulting in conflict. Usually, because of the overarching power of the state and the acquiescent habits of the citizen, these conflicts are resolved by suppression the individual's will and the expression of the state's. But this is not always so.

What happens when a person refuses to accept the myth of the citizen, and chooses to act within the context of a different, more personal myth? The issues involved are complex, and are of central concern to what it means to be human, and to live ethically within a state and culture. Our literature is replete with attempts to come to terms with this conflict. The ancient Greeks vitally concerned themselves with it. Medea and Antigone both denied the myth of the state. By examining the strategies and motives behind their assertions of individuality, the pursuit of the personal myth, one can explore the range and depth of the issues involved in the-individual-versus-the-state conflict.

The myth of the individual as citizen is limited, stilted. It does not encompass the full spectrum of human endeavor and only partially accounts for what motivates a human. It is fairly serviceable provided one lives within the mainstream of the state, but for citizens who are more marginal, who either by circumstance or by choice live near the edge, there come certain times of crisis when one must decide whether to accede to the demands of the state, denying one's personal myth, or to act—to be a free agent to determine the parameters of the appropriate for oneself, as did Medea and Antigone. The factor of being forced to decide in a moment of crisis is important, because at such times, one's psyche is contracted, lacking expansiveness and balance, flirting with insanity. When pushed to this extreme, the choice can easily seem strident and as stark as that between being and nothingness.

The decision to act or to acquiesce is modeled clearly by another classical character—Hamlet. Like Antigone and Medea, he considered the question and chose to act—to be. But unlike the Greek authors, Shakespeare allows Hamlet to make this decision in a very clear, conscious way, uncomplicated by fringe issues. Hamlet also differs from the Greek characters in that he is not marginal, but well vested in the state-sanctioned myth. After all, he is a prince, in line to inherit the throne. For him, the question can be put simply:

> To be, or not to be, that is the question:
> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
> And by opposing end them . . . (56-60).

The issue is framed from beyond citizenship, in universal terms: all things considered, what is "nobler in the mind"—what should a human being do? This context is typical for one contemplating going beyond the bounds of citizenship. For Hamlet, the state itself is in the wrong, acting contrary to its own myth, and offers no remedy. He decides to act, as an free agent, to attempt setting things aright. Hamlet's decision reflects his inner state, his views of himself, his stance in the cosmos, his personal ethics, his grip on sanity. The questions facing Hamlet, like those facing Antigone and Medea, are fundamentally those of what to do when circumstances arise that are not accounted for by the myth of citizenship.

Antigone and Medea, uninvested in the myth of the citizen, make the same decision as Hamlet, to be, but in a very different context. The image of Antigone performing the forbidden symbolic burial by throwing dust on her dead brother is somehow akin to that of Gandhi walking to the sea and picking up a handful of salt. It is theatrical, and at least on the surface, implicates no one but herself. By contrast, Medea conjures the image of an elemental, crushing-through force—Hamlet's decision pushed to the frontiers of the thinkable. Like Hamlet, they both choose being, the assertion of the individual. Their actions, as will be explained below, imply a personal myth, one contrary to the myth of the citizen.

Antigone's decision is interesting in that she refuses to accept a new mythology, a new consensus reality—that the individual is a citizen, and owes primary allegiance to the state. Her loyalty is to the older, displaced, myth—that one is first and foremost a member of a clan, a blood loyalty. This older myth requires her to perform the ritual of burial of her kin, without which the gods will not be appeased. The new myth requires her to obey the king.

In evaluating Antigone's decision, it is important to keep in mind that her life is formed by decisions and circumstances beyond her control, pushing her beyond the bounds of balance. Her father a patricide, a disgraced outcast, her mother dead by suicide, her family lineage shown to be incestuous—she has truly borne all these things well. Her brothers' mutual destruction and Creon's decision that her brother go unburied provides the means for her to express this imbalance. She expresses her view of her predicament clearly in her first speech:

> . . . There's nothing,
> no pain—our lives are pain—no private shame,
> no public disgrace, nothing I haven't seen
> in your griefs and mine. (5-8)

This seems accurate, although somewhat hyperbolic. But what she makes of this predicament—to defiantly assert the fallen myth of the family, the clan—is of her own choosing, and contrasts sharply with the much less extreme stance Ismene takes in essentially the same predicament:

> My poor sister, if things have come to this,
> who am I to make or mend them, tell me,
> what good am I to you? . . . (47-9)
>
> . . . .
>
> I'm forced, I have no choice—I must obey
> the ones who stand in power. Why rush to extremes?
> It's madness, madness. (79-81)

With even her sister, her last solid link to her clan, rejecting her stance, Antigone stands alone in the cosmos, surrounded by ruins, and only tenuously supported by the remote gods of a gone world. She feels betrayed, and is angry. She has no outside referents. When she looks out, she sees the narcissistic manifestations of her own reflection. All she hears is the echo of her own thought and memory. She has been forced by circumstance to reside in the realm of the angry gods, a realm of constant contention, assertion, and competition for power, a realm inhabited by her father before his fall, by her brothers before their mutual destruction, and by her present protectors. She yearns to escape this claustrophobic realm, to return to the human, a less grandiose realm of personal choice, of clear, small prerogatives, and of conscience. She sees the burial of her brother as the vehicle for this return. Failing this, she, like Banquo's murderer, is one, "so weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune, that [she] would set [her] life on any chance to mend it or be rid on 't."

Antigone's image is one of solitude, anger, and pride—a sure recipe for extremes, imbalance. She sees her position as intolerable, and decides that, at whatever cost, she will break out-return to her native realm and native gods, one where her decisions are her own, and her choices are clear. Is this a neurotic decision? Ismene, the voice of resignation, thinks it is. The Chorus, the voice of stability and continuity thinks it is:

> Like father, like daughter,
> passionate, wild . . .
> she hasn't learned to bend before adversity. (525-27)

The crux of the matter is this: Although Antigone wishes to portray her actions within the myth of the clan, her choices and actions are those indicative of another myth—that of the individual. This can be seen in Antigone's conversations with Ismene at the beginning of the play, in her condemnation of her sister, the last of her clan, in her decision to go it alone, in constantly relying on her personal perceptions, her personal referents, her ignoring of any advice from the other, as the basis for her judgments. Her constant referent is "I", as opposed to the more inclusive "we", "us", "our", etc. She sets herself up as over against, as opposed to, all that is outside of herself.

Antigone's choices within this mythic structure are instructive for us today, in a time of the rugged individual, things falling apart, and dysfunctional everything—a time in which this myth is very much alive. According to this myth, Antigone is essentially independent of her surroundings and fellow humans, free to act for herself, even if this means breaking the bonds of community and obligation. The only condition placed upon Antigone for acting within this mythic structure is that she must be willing to accept the consequences of her actions. For Antigone, this condition is acceptable, even though it means her death.

Does Antigone make an ethically defensible choice? The comparison of her actions to Gandhi's is superficial. Although the image of Gandhi at the beach is that of a singular figure acting alone, the reality is that he acts not for himself, as does Antigone, but as the representative of a community of which he is a leader. Unlike Creon, his impulse is not that of the angry god, but that of the boddhisatva—the enlightened one who chooses to immerse himself in community. Antigone's ethical stance is not Gandhi's. But still, is her choice ethically defensible? To dismiss her choice as that of one who is seriously unbalanced, whose judgement is impaired, is to beg the question. Which set of myths are of more import: those of the collective, or those of the individual? What basis, standards, should one use in deciding the issue?

Medea's actions offer a rich context to further explore the problem of the individual acting outside of the prevailing mythic structure. Her actions contrast sharply with Antigone's. For Medea, no action is too extreme if it suits her purposes, no emotion is too exaggerated an expression of her inner state. For her, conscience is strictly a secondary consideration. Yet, until she is deserted by Jason, Medea lives within a state, is connected. We are informed by Medea's nurse that:

> . . . She gave
> Pleasure to the people of her land of exile,
> And she herself helped Jason in every way. (11-13)

Medea's older, atavistic impulses are reawakened only after she is betrayed by Jason, to whom she has devoted her life and energies. To the extent possible for an outsider, Medea invested in the myth of the state. We can see in Jason's betrayal of Medea, and in Creon's sanction and encouragement of this betrayal, how thin is the spell cast over the individual by the myth of the citizen. For Creon to justify the wedding of Jason to his daughter as being in the best interests of the state is ridiculous. A scenario in which the Corinthians would look favorably upon the king's daughter's marriage to a man who would abandon and make a dangerous enemy of his first wife, make stepchilden of his offspring, and sully the prestige of the royal family is difficult to imagine. Surely there were other princes and noblemen, both foreign and domestic who would have proven appropriate, and less problematic matches for the princess.

There is no civilized reason for this match. The state is behaving wildly, irrationally, outside the bounds of its own mores and social contracts. Thus, the unbridled power of the state clashes with the unbridled power of the individual.

What are we, as modern readers, to make of this? Within our modern frame of reference, Medea is a monster, unacceptable. But Medea does not live with us. She resides in the realm of the clan. She is a sorceress, and converses with the supernatural in a huge, pre-civilized realm inhabited by enormous powers which belong to those who can harness them. Is this world, and its mores, inferior to the world of the Greeks, or to our world? For Medea, this is the only realm possible, if she is "to be"—the realm of the individual, tortured, pushed to its far, prerational extremes.

One short sidenote: Why does the choice "not to be" seem so distasteful, so spineless? In all of the examples cited, at least in the short run it would be better for the well-being of the community, the state, for the character to choose "not to be." But do the actions of these characters somehow, in a larger context, tend to curb the excesses of the state? Rulers must be wary of pushing their subjects to extremes, as they can wreak havoc upon the state. Perhaps in the long run, the excesses of Antigone and Medea are in the interests of the state, serving to deter its excesses.

After considering the motives of Medea and Antigone, what ethical conclusions are possible for one wishing to live in harmony and balance? Antigone seeks justice and harmony. Medea seeks justice, after her own fashion. Is there any ultimate foundation to the thoughts of the ethicists? Augustine's "Love God, and then do what you will" is danger itself in the hands of a Medea. Kant's categorical imperative, that one can only act as one would wish all others to act in the same situation, can be used to justify Antigone's actions. Does ethical relativism coupled with political cunning provide our highest standard of social justice? When asked by his nephew whether or not to use ethics in his political campaign, Huey Long replied, "Hell yes, use every damn thing you can get your hands on!" Citizens of all eras have looked on, appalled by the Huey Longs of their time. But a more universal theme in *Antigone* and *The Medea* on which to found a less brutal ethics is elusive. Perhaps citizenship's final appeal is to practicality, modesty, moderation, and human decency.

Phil Cook

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> the city casts out
> that man who weds himself to inhumanity
> thanks to reckless daring. Never share my hearth
> never think my thoughts, whoever does such things.
> (Sophocles 77)

Sophrosyne in Antigone

To say that the ancient Greeks admired balance, harmony, and moderation would be an understatement. The maxim "moderation in all things" evinces that "a sense of the wholeness of things *[sophrosyne]* is perhaps the most typical feature of the Greek mind" (Kitto 169). In most cases, Greek heroes and mythological characters such as Odysseus and Icarus demonstrate the need for moderation in success and survival. Likewise, government should also aspire toward balance, harmony, and moderation for the community to flourish. Hence, *Antigone* exemplifies the need for such a balance between the masculine and the feminine in government. In *Antigone*, the woman's role in a government provides a balance between family and state without which both would fail.

Since the days of goddess worship and fertility cults, communities held women responsible for the traditions associated with birth, sustenance, and burial, all natural aspects of family life. Deities associated with such rites and traditions tended toward the feminine, if not a combination of the sexes, and were usually connected to the earth or nature in some way or another. "It is not hard to suppose that mother-goddess and fertility cults had existed . . . as long as agriculture" (Andrewes 236).

As men slowly began to assert their dominance over women, the popularity of goddesses and earth-related nature traditions began to decline as well. "The rites by which the earth-mother's fertility might be excited . . . were perhaps found unseemly by the epic tradition [i.e., Homer and the male world], impairing that special aristocratic dignity which it attributed to its gods" (232). Thus, Gaia falls to Zeus as the Olympians overtake the natural, older gods. Although counted among the Olympians, Demeter and Persephone are older than the other gods and constitute a link to the earth-mother associated with fertility and the natural cycles of birth and death. Demeter reigns over the cycles of nature and fertility especially as they deal with agriculture, the sustenance of a people. On the other hand, Persephone reigns in her kingdom of the dead with Hades. This mother / daughter relationship of

Demeter and Persephone represents all aspects of life. In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Hades "against her will . . . seized [Persephone] and on his golden chariot / carried her away as she wailed" (Homeric Hymns 2). We later learn that "no other immortal / is to be blamed save cloud-gathering Zeus / who gave [Persephone] to Hades, his own brother, to become / his buxom bride" (3-4). The male-oriented gods either incorporate the older female gods into their pantheon or subdue them to the point of extinction. While "Demeter . . . has been tamed to a quiet stately dignity" (Andrewes 233), in other words retired from her circle of worship, Persephone falls into the former class.

The subjugation of the earth-goddess and fertility cults sheds a different light on the character Antigone, who comes from a family rife not only with unusual problems but with the very essence of the fertility cult. "The male consort of such a goddess . . . may be born as a baby . . . and combine this role with his role as the earth's sexual partner" (Andrewes 232). While Jocasta, Antigone's mother, is not a goddess, she and her husband / son, Oedipus, certainly correspond to these traditional roles. Antigone cannot grow to an ordinary adulthood having lived in this incestuous family.

In light of Antigone's family background, the reader should not be surprised to see that she takes the traditions of her sexual heritage to heart and even beckons her sister, Ismene, to join her in the execution of burial rights for their brother, Polynices. In doing this, Antigone also exercises her feminine rights as a family member; she takes up the role of the goddess worshipper even though we do not directly see her engaged in actual goddess worship. The bottom line here is her family and her sexual tradition. In the initial line of the play, Antigone calls attention to her familial heritage. "My own flesh and blood—dear sister, dear Ismene, / how many griefs our father Oedipus handed down!" (1). Not only does Antigone remind the reader of her infamous family, she also brings the reader into the more alien world of women whose traditions demand attention. Ismene is not only a dear family member, but a "dear sister," someone whom Antigone would hope to find sympathetic with her cause. Ismene's insistence, however, that she and Antigone are "mere women, / . . . not born to contend with men" (75), severs Antigone's female familial ties, leaving her as the only woman to fulfill traditional roles. For the remainder of the play, Antigone not only distances herself from Ismene emotionally but never again addresses her as sister. Opposing loyalties divide the two sisters. Ismene remains devoted to law, a man's convention; Antigone, however, grounds herself with the old traditions of family.

In the interaction between Antigone and Ismene, the reader can see that the latter behaves typically for a Greek woman in her obedience to Creon's decree. Her actions remind the reader that she has done what a patriarchal society condones as right. Creon, then, comes to symbolize the male aspect of government, including warfare and economy. Just as Antigone's first words reveal her feminine role in the play, so Creon's expose his interest in the state. His announcement that "the ship of state is safe" (180) as well as his later assertion that "our country is our safety" (211) reveals Creon's loyalty to the polis and his alacrity in his protection of it, even to the extent that he virtually destroys the family. Ironically, however, the "ship of state is safe" only because Creon's nephew dies. With the last of Oedipus' male children dead, Creon, the brothers' uncle, gains control of Thebes. Hence, Creon exerts his control both as a king and as a man through warfare.

Creon also employs economy to tip the scales of balance toward exclusive maleness in government. While no actual trading or purchasing occurs in the play, Sophocles uses images which allude to economy. With Polynices' body scattered with dust, symbolic of burial, Creon assumes immediately that the sentries have succumbed to bribery.

> Everyone—
> the whole crew bribed to commit this crime
> they've made one thing sure at least:
> sooner or later they will pay the price. (342)

Despite the fact that money makes men "adept at every kind of outrage" (341), Creon continues to use economical images when he demands that those bribed will "pay the price". Further on in the play, Creon intimates that the purpose of having sons is to "pay his enemy back with interest" (717). The family clearly serves an economic purpose here. Finally, Creon even tells Tiresias, a figure deserving reverence, that "seers are mad for money" (1171). Tiresias does not even remotely fit this accusation. Creon's use of economically loaded terms like "pay," "owe," "trade," "buy off," "bribe" and most overtly, "money," show the reader that his interests lie not in family values (Haemon), wisdom (Tiresias), or traditions (sentry). Instead, Creon stands by economy, in addition to warfare, as he rules Thebes.

This male dominance excludes the more natural feminine side needed to balance a community. In the study of images and metaphors, the reader can see that Creon does, indeed, exclude the natural, represented here by Antigone. Repeatedly, Creon refers to Antigone in images which compare her to animals, natural creatures which need the control of men. "I've known spirited horses you can break with a light bit" (532-33), he says, referring to Antigone's rebellious spirit. In a more revealing accusation, Creon refers to both Antigone and Ismene as "vipers" (598), symbolically linking the women to the earth-mother cults of the past. In fact, the Furies, "daughters of Earth and darkness . . . [who] were represented as pursuing with speed and fury, snakes writhing in their hair" (Roche 242), want Orestes punished for having killed his mother in *The Eumenides*, another play which concentrates on the violation of family traditions. Although Creon admits Ismene's innocence in this rebellion, his connection of Antigone to the old goddesses proves accurate. Despite the fact that Creon sees his true antagonist as Antigone, Creon does not compromise. Instead, he deals with her in a way inappropriate for good government by saying that Antigone "no longer exists" (640), thereby denying her existence on all levels of the text.

In denying Antigone and, thus, her womanhood, Creon also denies the existence of the deities on whom Antigone repeatedly calls for justice. She believes that "Justice, dwelling with the gods / beneath the earth, ordain[s] such laws for men" (980). In performing her duty as a woman by burying her brother, Antigone already counts herself as one of the dead. "I'll soon be there, soon embrace my own, / the great growing family of our dead / Persephone has received among her ghosts" (105), she says. Again, these Chthonic deities align with the old mother-earth traditions, and Antigone, who finds comfort in the thoughts of her own "reunion", sees Creon's denial of Polynices' return to his "mother" as sacrilegious. Even the chorus, symbolic of the Theban people, admits that "the oldest of the gods he [Creon] wears away— / the earth, the immortal, the inexhaustible" (382).

Despite resistance from Creon, Antigone stands up for her gods, family and sex. Her burial of Polynices shows Creon, as well as Thebes itself, that her causes demand respect if not honor. She tells Creon,

> Nor did I think your edict had such force
> that you, a mere mortal, could override the gods,
> the great unwritten unshakable tradition .
> They're alive, not just today or yesterday:
> they live forever, from the first of time. (503)

By standing up to Creon and his irreverence for the old gods, family and women, Antigone puts herself in mortal danger. Nonetheless, she bears no shame "for a moment, / not to honor my brother, my own flesh and blood" (572-73) and insists that

"Death longs for the same rites for all" (584). More than anything else, Antigone demonstrates the need for wholeness, a balance between the male and female interests, in a leader and his government.

When Creon and Antigone come face to face for the first time, their real opposition becomes apparent. Creon comes to the conflict armed with his rhetoric of war and economy only to grapple unsuccessfully with the notion that a member of his own family has defied the law he made. The simple act of coming face to face with the enemy and finding it one of his own breaks down all defenses. All façades fall away to reveal the simplest of conflicts: male versus female. "I am not the man, not now: she is the man / if this victory goes to her and she goes free" (541-45), Creon reasons.

Here, he must choose between the state, which he represents, and the family of which he is a part. If Creon allows Antigone to go free in the name of family, he has lost his battle and his economy; he will receive no "payment" for rebellion. On the other hand, if Creon follows through with the prescribed punishment and puts Antigone to death, he wins the battle, receives payment but will lose the family. "The mind convicts itself" (550) to damnation in the eyes of tradition and the old gods as Creon chooses state (male) over family (female). "Oh but I hate it more / when a traitor, caught red-handed, / tries to glorify his crimes" (552-54). Creon misses the whole point of Antigone's rebellion, since he believes she seeks glorification for herself. She retorts, "What greater glory could I win / than to give my own brother decent burial" (561-62). In Creon the reader can see the intricacies of the government and the family at work, since he is part of both. One decision effects the other, and balance is essential for ensuing success. His decision against family upsets the balance of government, bringing disastrous consequences.

On the other hand, in Antigone's view the laws of government have not been violated, so much as the laws of family tradition have been desecrated. Polynices is Antigone's brother, not a traitor against the state. Creon refuses to see this because he is steeped in the male aspects of war and economy. In addition, he is also reluctant to give some of his control over to the feminine part of himself as represented by family. He does not place importance on the family's role in government. Antigone's final defense that "I was born to join in love, not hate— / that is my nature" (590-91) points out the difference between the two Thebans, mainly those of gender and traditions associated with each. Like Hades' subjugation of Persephone, Creon pushes Antigone and her traditions of family to the underworld, a place of nonexistence, thus upsetting the balance of government and eventually himself through the family.

Obviously, this result is not true, as Kitto stresses, to "the Greek instinct ... to take the widest view, to see things as an organic whole" (169). In this situation, sophrosyne is not the daily order of business if turmoil and imbalance exist. Antigone's actions, so extreme they result in not only her death but Haemon's, rival Creon's extremities. Hence, the reader sees not only a near annihilation of Oedipus' family but a similar situation with Creon's. Even as Creon denied Antigone's very existence earlier in the play, he now also denies his own. "Take me away, quickly, out of sight. / I don't even exist—I'm no one. Nothing" (1445-46). Creon's nothingness negates his roles as husband, father, uncle or king, and his stubborn "lack of judgement" (1373) virtually destroys his family. If a man such as Creon destroys his own family through such imbalance, then later generations will also feel the effect of these decisions. It stands to reason that without families or regard for the family, government cannot succeed nor even survive. The state and the family (which encompass tradition and femininity) cannot exclude each other. Contrarily, these two ostensible opposites need each other for wholeness or *sophrosyne* in the Greek polis.

If *sophrosyne* is to exist in the Greek city / state or in contemporary governments, the state must acknowledge and incorporate the needs of the family which the woman represents. When a state goes so far as to violate the rights of the family or its members, government risks extinction just as Creon did. "The future rests with the ones who tend the future" (1455). Those who "tend the future" consist of an ambiguous group possibly made up of government officials, parents, or other care givers. Antigone shows the reader the importance of this through her actions. She willingly gives up her marriage, future children and even her life to stand up for her rights as a woman and a family member. In fact, her metaphors comparing her death to a marriage stress the point that the opposition of state and family is death. She has "no home on earth and none below" (941), neither a traditional home nor a governmental one.

While a contemporary woman may not actually give her life in quest of wholeness, she does bear the same burden Antigone did. In a day when the specter of war looms in every corner of the globe, and the love of money appears to be at the heart of so many injustices, the family must fend for itself. Often, parents, when both actually live with the children, must both work to provide basic necessities for their children. This leaves children alone for some portion of the day, opening invitations for delinquency and substance abuse problems not to mention the disturbing concept that children learn to fear strangers for their own safety. Additionally, it has also become more commonplace today that a parent is without a job, causing even more stress on the family. While welfare helps, it does not solve problems. Even families who, five and ten years ago, lived moderately well, cannot make ends meet and have come to the point where they actually live in their vehicles under bridges and overpasses. Then there are the poverty stricken who have always been poor. These people slip farther and farther down the social ladder, living off welfare, sometimes abusing it, and incurring the outrage of their better-to-do neighbors. While the family struggles to survive in a modern recession (despite what economists say), government officials, like Creon, put their interests in wars in foreign countries where the main goal does not lie in the defense of the country, economy on a larger scale which, only over time, trickles down to aid the common people who need it most, and political issues concerning the elite who, through special interest groups, control state and national legislatures.

With a government of this caliber apparently in operation now, people today stand in Antigone's sandals faced with the task of defiance and protest. While Antigone protests her rights as a woman in ancient Thebes, men, too, can stand up for the old traditions which honor the natural side of humanity. Haemon does this in the play despite his position as Creon's son. Haemon's concern for the wholeness of Thebes prompts him to answer Creon's charge that "every word [he] says is a blatant appeal for her" with "And you, and me, and the gods beneath the earth" (Sophocles 841). Clearly Haemon sees this issue as more than one concerning his love for Antigone. The needs of the family transcend the intimacy of two people.

Likewise, citizens today have the obligation to stand up for the family. With violence on our street corners and every kind of abuse from the cradle to the rest home, the old gods need representation. These traditions of old need rebirth, and women provide the vehicle for that return to humanity. Whether through touching the lives of others on an everyday basis, as a social worker, nurse or teacher might do, or through running for the United States Senate, as in this electoral year, those in power must hear this voice of old, family, tradition and embrace it. People must be able to "bury their brothers" when that duty calls, even when it means certain punishment. The point remains, however, that attending to family matters should bear no governmental punishment. Security for the right of men and women to take off of work when their children are sick and need attention should be made available. All citizens regardless of income should have access to health care. Babies should not have to live their first minutes of life in a cocaine or crack induced stupor only to withdraw slowly and painfully. Teenagers should not have to find out about the dangers of AIDS the hard way.

As the chorus in *Antigone* says, "The future rests on those who tend the future" (Sophocles 1455). As seen in the play, government without nurture negates itself. Likewise, the family needs the nurture of government for protection and growth. Women and their traditions, as evinced by Antigone, must continue to perform their rites and trust to their natures without government interference. This will bring balance back to government if both sides have equal power. Allow emotion. Allow intuition. Allow compassion. Allow family. It does, after all, form the basis of government. Even Creon, although he recognizes the impact too late, acknowledges his involvement as a king, uncle and father when he says, "Show me the man who rules his household well: I'll show you someone fit to rule the state" (739-40).

Danette Bermea

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A Conflict of Values

Is it "better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven" as Satan asserts in Milton's *Paradise Lost*? Refusing to serve God and obey his laws, Satan chooses to assert himself and follow his own proud conscience. A similar dilemma of whether to serve or assert oneself occurs in *Antigone*. Like Satan, Creon fails to recognize that a state by reigning serves its subjects. Unlike Satan, however, Antigone chooses conscience over an unjust law; it is Satan's intent, never Antigone's, to seize total authority or power. Once a choice is made and loyalty is pledged to one side of an issue, a conflict arises. If the conflict is between serving eternal values or obeying the state or one's own conscience, the clash has far reaching implications.

Sophocles' play *Antigone* raises the question of whether a citizen needs to obey an unjust law. In order to explore this issue carefully, Sophocles also calls into question the source of the authority establishing the law, whether this source is the ultimate one or not, and whether the individual in all good conscience is obliged to obey such a law. In *Antigone* the Greek audience is asked to consider who has the right to tell whom what to do? Is it the one in power such as the monarch, tyrant, or elected official, who has the ultimate authority in establishing and enforcing the law? Or does the individual conscience have to agree or not agree to be ruled when the higher authority of the divine laws is challenged? When the power representing absolute authority, in the person of Creon, meets the citizen with a devotion to moral values and an active conscience in the person of Antigone, a clash results. An astute politician would attempt to mediate between these two recognized authorities. If this fails, Sophocles suggests, and no compromise is reached, then the only alternative is to establish the source of the highest authority.

In *Antigone*, the ethical issue of where one's loyalties lie—to the family or the state—arises with Creon's edict. The outcome of the play is far more involved than one character's refusal to obey the civil law. Antigone, Ismene, Creon, Haemon, Eurydice and the entire city of Thebes become caught up in the inability to compromise or recognize the ultimate authority, which is the gods, not man.

Antigone is clearly aware of her duty to the state. Its laws are to be obeyed and Creon's edict is clear. The king announces that Polynices, son of Oedipus, is a traitor to the city of Thebes and anyone who attempts to "dignify him with burial" or "mourn him at all" will be put to death (227). The body is to be left as "carrion for the birds and gods to tear" (230) and a warning to others who meddle with government. Yet Antigone is also aware of her duty to her family and the gods. Thus she is forced to make a choice and in doing so, she breaks Creon's new law and questions the authority of the state to meddle in family affairs.

Antigone is strong-willed, but she is also very rational. She clearly outlines how she came to her decision to disobey the law and bury her brother. The first thing she establishes is that Creon is mortal, not a god, and therefore cannot override the traditions of the gods, i. e. burial of the dead. Then she reasons that the gods are alive forever, and she does not wish to anger them. Furthermore, if she breaks divine law, it would only be to avoid wounding a mere man's pride, Creon's pride to be exact. (The exchange doesn't appeal to Antigone.) Then she speculates on the outcome of all life and that is death. Is death a thing to be avoided? Considering the pain, hardships, and insults she has known as the daughter of Oedipus, death is reward rather than a hardship for her! Lastly, she relates the agony of her soul knowing the brother is unburied. That agony is excruciating, and it drives her to the deed.

Next, Antigone confronts Ismene with the issue of loyalty to family driven by the gods over loyalty to the state driven by kings. Convinced that the law is unjust, Antigone seeks her sister's aid and offers her the opportunity to join in the burial rite. Antigone clearly states that the gods, by tradition, demand that the dead pass into their realm; and since they are nearest of surviving kin they are responsible for performing the rite. Ismene, however, lacks the courage to disobey the law. As a woman, she pleads the weakness of their sex. Attempting to change Antigone's resolve, she reminds her of the tenuous position she and her sister hold in the community as outsiders, branded by the relation to Oedipus. She fears death by stoning and argues that it is not the place of women to "contend" with men. Women submit and are obedient. This is what the good citizen does according to Ismene's advice:

> we're underlings, ruled by much stronger hands,
> so we must submit in this, and things still worse.
>
> ....
>
> I for one, I'll beg that the dead to forgive me—
> I'm forced, I have no choice—I must obey
> the one's who stand in power. Why rush to extremes?
> It's madness, madness. (76-81)

Even the chorus echoes the advice of Ismene:

> When he weaves in

> the laws of the land, and the justice of the gods
> that binds his oath together
> he and his city rise high—
> but the city casts out
> that man who weds himself to inhumanity. (409-14)

Thus Antigone is referred to as the girl who is wild, irrational, "in love with impossibility" "and on a hopeless quest" (104,108). For the moment it appears that Antigone is in the wrong and needs to bend to Creon's edict, and capitulate to the authority of the state. Creon insists Antigone is proud and guilty of breaking the laws and of boasting of her crime (536-40). Yet Antigone never proposes to spite Creon, nor to seize his power, nor to beg him to change his edict. She acts in love, she says to Creon: "I was born to join in love, not hate—that is my nature" (590-91). Moreover, it was never Antigone's intention to "contend" with Creon or even question his authority to rule, but rather to heed her own conscience and bow to a higher authority. This is the authority that bids mankind to bury the dead, and in Greek society, it becomes the role of the women to do so. If Antigone is faulted, then it is here in not seeking a compromise with Creon. Yet how could she? It was not the woman's place to do so.

Like Antigone and Ismene, Creon insists he, too, is devoted to the gods and doing their will. He has his own moral value system, and he is single minded in his view of what law is right for the state. Gods do not approve of traitors, period. Creon is responsible for restoring order to the state, and he thinks the best way to do it is to set an example for all of Thebes to heed. It doesn't occur to him that his order will be challenged in any way. Because he places himself in a box, he is doomed to fail. Feeling insecure in his new position as king, he constantly mentions his fears of people bribing his subjects to turn against him. This interest in money merits much more attention than any contemplation of nobler thoughts, or of the rightness of the law, or of the divine. One has the impression that Creon is really more devoted to Mammon than to the other gods. Perhaps he is incapable of conceiving of a nobler motive.

By this mode of thinking, then, Creon seals his own doom. He insists that he alone is the absolute political authority over the city and threatens and blusters at anyone who dares to show a lack of loyalty to him. Thus his political authority becomes a personal one as he views Antigone. She, however, is not disloyal to his person; she simply places her first duty to family and the gods, and feels Creon's authority does not extend this far. Consequently, she does not see herself defying Creon. He, on the other hand, views things quite differently: "The city is the king's-that's the law!" (825). Furthermore, he refuses to offer any compromise at all or even consider one such as a quiet, private burial after a period of public disgrace; or public honors for the faithful dead and private ceremonies for the traitors performed as quickly as possible outside the city walls.

Creon has tunnel-vision, and no one can change his mind. Ismene is the first to realize her own mistake. She begs Creon to allow her to partake in Antigone's punishment, but it is too late. Overcoming her cowardice, Ismene realizes her priorities were wrong. Next Haemon gently suggests to his father that he goes too far in condemning Antigone to death. Haemon reports that the citizens side with Antigone, and suggests that even royal rights are not protected when honor to the gods is trampled down. Even Tiresias says that pride is a crime: "Where's the glory, killing the dead twice over?" (1140)

The conflict then is one of degree, but Creon fails to see this. Antigone is not presuming to reduce Creon's authority or belittle his responsibilities to the citizens. What she is asserting is that a higher authority supersedes his: punish the act of treachery against the state but combine it with reverence to what is due the gods. Creon's claim to infallible authority is negated by his refusal to any genuine compromise. Such an act spells defeat for him. He fears if he lifts the edict the citizens will think he is a liar, that he will lose respect, that his own grandchildren might be rebellious to the state, or that he will have been outdone by a woman. After all, the siege of the city has just been lifted, and he needs to be in complete control. The idea of power possesses him. Give in to a woman's reasoning of what may be truly just? Creon confuses the message with the medium and dismisses the idea as preposterous.

On the other hand, Creon can not risk a conflict with his citizens. This would be political suicide. Thus, heeding Haemon's words that the people think Antigone should receive a reward, not punishment for her act, he changes his mind about the mode of her death. Since Antigone has openly admitted that she heard the edict but disregarded it, she must die for Creon to save face. However, fearing a severe reaction from the citizens to a public stoning, he has Antigone privately entombed alive. By leaving food in the tomb, Creon absolves himself of the charge of murder. He does not see in this act any kind of compromise. Rather it is expedient for his own safety.

At this point in the play it is interesting to note that Antigone, Ismene, Haemon and Creon not only cannot reach a compromise, but each has alienated himself from the other. Creon can not afford, really, to do either, that is compromise or alienate himself from others, in his role of king. He needs the support of the citizens, especially at this critical time. Tiresias, literally representing blind vision, attempts to get Creon back on course by suggesting a way out of the dilemma. Even great people make mistakes, advises Tiresias, but the point is they rectify the mistake before it is too late. Self-righteously, Creon seals his doom. He asserts that he is in fact doing the will of Zeus (never mind Hades), and Tiresias is only a trouble maker, bribed to anger him in public. There is no reason to change his course, especially not for a young girl whom he now despises as one attempting to usurp his authority. The door for compromise is closed. Creon refuses to give way.

A compromise would have been politically astute. Without it everyone now loses. The very safety of his own family threatened and the well being of the entire city called in question, Creon begrudgingly rescinds the edict. It is too late. The civil law enacted upon family customary law has taken its toll. The city is spurned by the gods who refuse to accept its offerings. Creon's attempt appease the gods first and see to Antigone later leads to more disaster. By the time Polynices is buried properly, Antigone is dead. Haemon, full of grief, failing to slay his father, in a fury of passion kills himself. Hearing of this second son's death, Euridyce curses Creon and takes her own life. The ripple of repercussion, then, when one individual defies the state for the sake of conscience, flows out to encompass many lives. But it fails to end even here. The entire state will suffer from this hubris of Creon and his failure in judgment. Creon is left with no heirs. Moreover, he is hardly in a state fit to rule the kingdom. Too late, he realizes the state is for the good of all and that the law is made to serve all:

> Wisdom is by far the greatest part of joy
> and reverence towards the gods must be safeguarded.
> The mighty words of the proud are paid in full
> with mighty blows of fate, and at long last
> those blows will teach us wisdom. (1466-70)

The lesson, then, is a hard one to learn. Once the state immoderately oversteps its bounds, everything seems to fall apart. Private sins merit private punishment. Thus Antigone dies, but it is a noble death for a noble cause. The valiant soldiers have been buried with honor, but she has given the traitor his due, just a burial, nothing more. State sins, however, impose public misery. Creon is tragic, and we empathize with him and his fate, for few of us have the conviction or the grit of an Antigone, even though we admire her. All in all, no one really wins when compromise fails. The encroachment of Creon's authority over divine laws and conscience needs to be checked, and in this play, it is.

Isn't the civil law of the present day doing the same thing as Creon did when it reaches into twentieth century life to regulate morality, religion, or the rearing of children? Perhaps the lesson from *Antigone* is clearly that civil law should rule civil affairs and that the private citizen should rule his own private life, his own family, his own religious choices, uninhibited by the state as long as the state comes to no harm. When it comes to a question of authority, the highest authority must take precedence. Had Antigone obeyed Creon's edict, she would have entered Milton's hell; Creon finds himself already there; a state in *reigning* serves; then, in serving, truly reigns.

Diana Wolf

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Antigone: A Strange but Strong Woman

Sophocles, in his play *Antigone*, depicts Antigone as one who must choose whether to follow the edict of her uncle Creon and let her brother's body lie in dishonor or bury her brother according to family customs and religious dictates. Antigone believes she has the obligation to complete the burial. Even more important, she believes that if she accedes to the edict of Creon and does not bury Polynices, she will doom his soul to wander the earth endlessly, a condition that would give her guilt the rest of her life. To be loyal to her family and society and to give his soul repose, Antigone chooses to bury her brother, the act which leads to her tragic fate. In justifying Antigone's act, Sophocles demonstrates the relationship of women to the polis, to the family, and to the gods.

Antigone is caught in a conflict, not of her own making, but one that brings into collision the laws of the polis and the roles of women in practicing traditional burial rites. During Sophocles' time in Athens, the traditional importance of the family role was giving way to the increasing importance of the city-state, the polis. Although a Theban in the play, Antigone reflects the Athenian family unit when she defies the laws of the polis—in this case, the edict of Creon. Women, up to the time of Sophocles, had traditionally been in charge of the household, birth, and death; while the men, the full citizens, took care of voting, politics, and business. The female role was to run the household under the master's direction and to produce Athenian citizens. The women surely felt dismay when the laws of the polis began to undermine their limited rights (Knox 39-41). In this case, the actions of Antigone in daring to defy the ruler Creon must have been Sophocles' way of representing the feelings of many women of the day.

The conflict began when Creon declared that Polynices was a traitor to the city of Thebes and could neither be mourned nor buried (229-31). Antigone tells us about Creon's edict when she says,

> He's to be left unwept, unburied, a lovely treasure
> for birds that scan the field and feast to their heart's
> content. (34-35)

Here, as she talks with Ismene about the fate that has befallen their brother, she says that his death is not to be noted; they can not grieve over his fate. This young man, who died miserably, and who is the last male of the house of Lepidus, is going to be left in the field to rot or provide food for the scavenger birds that roam the sky.

Antigone is naturally distressed to picture her brother's body lying in the field instead of receiving a proper burial. She does not deny that he was wrong to gather an army of outsiders to attack Thebes, and she knows that he was responsible for the death of her other brother, Eteocles, but he was part of her family and she loved him (55). Antigone tells Ismene that Creon's edict was wrong because "... he has no right to keep me from my own" (60). Here she builds a case as a woman and as a sister who certainly had the time honored right to participate actively in performing the proper funeral rites for him.

Sophocles shows us that Creon could not be pictured all black in his determination not to honor Polynices and that Antigone did violate his law. Traditionally, traitors were not allowed to be buried within the city. They had to be taken outside the polis if they were allowed to be buried at all. Polynices had vowed to burn the city of his birth and leave it in ruins (137-38). He killed his brother, Eteocles, and caused the death of Creon's son, Megareus; thus he is a traitor to Thebes. Even the choragos agrees that Creon has the right to issue his edict when he says, "The power is yours, I suppose, to enforce it / with the laws, both for the dead and all of us, / the living (236-239). Antigone seems to be the only one who does not share his opinion. Creon considers Antigone's insistence on a proper burial for the slain man, this traitor, an act of disobedience. He says,

> Therefore
> we must defend the men who live by law,
> never let some woman triumph over us.
> Better to fall from power, if fall we must,
> at the hands of a man—never
> inferior to a woman, never. (755-761)

Creon believes that men who observe the laws, and this was most of the men of the polis, should be protected. There might be a time when a man or a city might fall but he could not imagine losing power to a woman. The idea was unthinkable. Having his nephew attack the polis was bad enough, but now his niece attacks his edict (and the city he represented), as well. Still, Antigone insisted that her brother deserved a proper burial because he was the son of royal parents (575). He was not some slave to be thrown away. Even if he had killed Eteocles in battle, they were still brothers. She chooses to bury him because "Death longs for the same rites for all" (584). While Creon may have the legal right to determine who is to be buried, he does not have the moral right to do so.

Creon's view of the law concerning burial rites changes considerably from the beginning of the play when he buries Eteocles to the end when he finally buries Polynices. He tells the chorus,

> Eteocles, who died fighting for Thebes,
> excelling all in arms: he shall be buried,
> crowned with a hero's honors, the cups we pour
> to soak the earth and reach the famous dead. (219-221)

Obviously, he respects Eteocles for his skill in fighting and says that no one is his equal in battle. He is going to bury the fallen hero with full honors. They will pour the sacred oil over Eteocles' head so that it can soak into the earth and carry his soul to the underworld to rest with other famous heroes. His feeling towards Polynices is quite different as we have already noted. He wants the polis to view the honor that one young man enjoys along side the lack of honor given the traitor. He says, "Never at my hand will the traitor be honored above the patriot" (232). He feels that Eteocles has every right to enjoy a hero's funeral but Polynices does not deserve that rite. When Antigone is brought in after the sentry found her burying Polynices, she tells Creon that she did not "think your edict had such force that you, a mere mortal, could override the gods" (503-04). She cannot imagine that Creon can believe that his edict is to take precedence over the traditions of the gods. Creon protests that honoring Polynices will dishonor Eteocles (580), and he can never give the same rite to the patriot as to the traitor (585). Haemon asks his father to reconsider, to change his mind about the burial (805). Even the choragos says that Haemon is making sense (811). Haemon says that Creon offends justice and tramples the honors of the gods (832, 835), but Creon counters that he is protecting his royal rights (834). Tiresias is the only one who seems to make a difference in Creon's feelings towards granting Polynices the funeral rites. He tells Creon, "And it is you—your high resolve that sets this plague on Thebes (1123-24). The pollution that is going to reign on Thebes will be all Creon's fault. Creon does not listen to him until the prophet says,

> You, you have no business with the dead,
> nor do the gods above—this is violence
> you have forced upon the heavens. (1191-93)

This is what Antigone has been telling him all along, that the rites of burial do not belong to him, they belong to the gods of the underworld and the women. He finally says,

> I know it myself—I'm shaken, torn.

It's a dreadful thing to yield . . . but resist now? (1218-20)

Creon knows that he is going to have to give in. This is made more difficult because of his pride, but he has no choice. "It's hard," he says, "but I will do it" (1229). Creon suffers because of his mistake, but he finally realizes that he has to give Polynices a proper burial. Even so, he says, "Whatever I touch goes wrong—once more a crushing fate's come down upon my head" (1464-65). The chorus tells us finally that:

Wisdom is by far the greatest part of joy,
reverence towards the gods must be safeguarded.
The mighty words of the proud are paid in full
with mighty blows of fate, and at long last
these blows will teach us wisdom. (1466-70)

At the beginning of the play, Sophocles has Creon believing that the laws of the polis are all powerful, but by the end, Creon realizes that his view of the law has been too rigid, and, now, he has a much larger view of the law.

Sophocles shows us that Antigone has a strong sense of loyalty for her family, both the living and the dead. She is deeply hurt as well as angry when her sister Ismene refuses to help with the burial. After all, they are the last of the children of King Oedipus and Queen Jocasta. Because of their parentage, they have suffered all their lives. Antigone says that Zeus has sent them every grief possible. She goes on to tell Ismene,

There's nothing
no pain—our lives are pain—no private shame
no public disgrace, nothing I haven't seen
in your disgrace and mine. (5-7)

Here and later (950-955) when she speaks of the incestuous relationship of their parents, we hear of the pain and the anguish as well as the shame. She does not want any further shame to fall on the once-proud house of Lepidus. The shame of the unintentional incestuous relationship between her parents, which caused her mother's suicide and her father's banishment from Thebes, has followed her all her life (5-7). Though Polynices might be considered a traitor, she wants their family's shame to end there. She does not want to be the cause of any more bad feelings towards her family. She says that no one will ever be able to say that she is a traitor for not standing up for what she knows is right. Later, Creon tries to make her feel ashamed because she is different from the other people of Thebes. "Aren't you ashamed to differ so from them?" he asks her, and then comments, "So disloyal" (571, 572). Antigone will not accept that label. She answers "not ashamed for a moment to honor my brother, my own flesh and blood" (574) by giving him the proper funeral rites. This ongoing shame will certainly cause her to cling to what little family she has left. She has taken care of the other members of the family at their deaths. She washed them, dressed them, and "poured the sacred cups across their tombs" (930), so how could she do less for Polynices? This young woman obviously loved both her brothers, and we can only imagine her grief when they killed each other. When Creon takes his stand and Ismene is afraid to join her, Antigone surely feels entirely alone; as she expressed her plight:

> I have no home on earth and none below,
> not with the living, not with the breathless dead. (941)

Even when Ismene reminds her that they are alone in the world, that they are the last of their family alive, and that their fate will be terrible if they disobey Creon's edict, Antigone is strong in her resolve. She will bury Polynices by herself since there was no one else to help (80-85). Antigone says that Ismene eventually will feel the grief most because the hatred of the dead will haunt her day and night, but she, Antigone, will have death but death with glory (110-12). After all, she will be dead much longer than she could ever be alive (87). A. L. Linforth suggests, "The greater length of time, now and hereafter, in which she must obey the august rulers of the lower world gives them higher authority here and now and cancels her obligation to earthly government" (186). The time Antigone or any other person will spend on earth can be measured in years, at best not a long time. The amount of time that she will spend in death is not measurable. That time will last for always, so of course it is more important to please those with whom she will spend that greater amount of time rather than please an earthly ruler. Antigone feels that she has every right to bury Polynices to please him and the other dead members of her family with whom she will spend eternity.

Sophocles has Antigone bury Polynices, at least symbolically, by sprinkling dust on the body. She is not caught the first time, and Creon has the dust removed. The guards wait on a hill, upwind from the decaying body, "jostling and baiting each other" in order to stay awake as the hot hours drag by (457). They don't want to further incur Creon's wrath with another burial. Even so, Sophocles has Antigone go back a second time to bury Polynices. In describing the scene, the sentry tells Creon that Antigone had wailed her grief and "called down withering curses" (475) on the ones who had left her brother there. He goes on to say,

> And she scoops up the dry dust,
> handfuls, quickly, and lifting a fine bonze urn,
> lifting it high and pouring, she crowns the dead
> with three full libations. (475-79)

Antigone must have acted very quickly so that the guards would not stop her. She set down the urn filled with oil while she quickly lifts the dry dust from the ground and sprinkles it over Polynices body, once, then again, and again. Just before the guards rush to stop her, she pours the ritual libations over her brother's head. When Antigone is caught by the guards, she openly admits her actions (492). Indeed, there is no reason to lie; the guards saw her. She has to cover him because "to let her own mother's son rot . . . would have been an agony" (320). When Antigone tells us that she knows that she will die, she insists that she must obey "the great unwritten, unshakable traditions" of the gods (512). She does not cower in fear of Creon, the ruler, even when he tells her " . . . she'll never escape" (543). Her brother, no matter what he did, could never be her enemy, because she "was born to join in love, not hate"(590), and she chooses to bury him.

Antigone feels so strongly about her right to bury the fallen man that she is willing to give up her right to be married. Though she is engaged to Haemon, she is to be " . . . denied my part in the [woman's] wedding songs" (907). Later, she will tell the chorus that she will never know the joy of having children, belonging to a husband, or becoming a more integral part of the community (1010-12). We think it strange that Antigone did not once mention her betrothed, Haemon, by name. We can only assume that her single-mindedness of purpose to honor her brother with burial left little room in her heart for feelings of affection for anyone else. In her last speech, she says that her tomb is her marriage chamber to show that her loyalty remains with her birth family. She is giving her life to Polynices; she has no life left to give to Haemon (900-907). She tells Creon that she would not have gone through this ordeal for any other relative. If a husband had died, she might have married again. If a child had died, she might have had another, but, with both parents dead, she would not have another brother (1005). For this love of Polynices, Creon brands her a criminal and declares that she must die. This love for her brother is further complicated by the maternal image we see when Antigone encounters the unburied body of her brother much "like a bird come back to an empty nest, / peering into its bed and all the babies gone" (472-474). We know that in the animal world, the maternal instinct to protect the young often ends in the sacrifice of the mother's life, so Antigone's willingness to sacrifice her life, if she must to obtain her goal, for her family and her brother, is in part maternal. Antigone gives up hope of marriage as well as her life to be loyal to Polynices.

Antigone's affinity with the household gods, the aspects of Zeus, the rituals of mourning, and with the voices of the chorus and Tiresias gives her the right to bury Polynices. Once buried with the proper rites, his soul will have repose. The act of mourning and the carrying out of the funeral protects the individual from the destructive forces of nature, decay, and keeps the memory of the person alive. The sentry gives us a premonition of the feelings of the gods when he maintains that surely the gods had covered Polynices' body that first time. Because there was no evidence of human intervention, it had to be the work of the gods. Even the choragos intimated that he would not be surprised if this were true. The whirlwind that came up suddenly allowed Antigone to approach her brother's body without being seen. Its dust filled the air while its wind stripped the leaves off the trees. This "whipping from the gods" seemed endless to the guards (467). They certainly thought this was godly intervention. When Creon questions Antigone, she asks him who on earth could " . . . say the ones below / don't find this [her actions] pure and uncorrupt (587). The gods below have not stopped her, so they must find her behavior acceptable. Antigone has been concerned with death all her life. She has given herself to death so she can serve the dead. She compares her impending death to that suffered by the goddess Niobe (915), and even the chorus compares her to the goddess Danae (1035). Surely, Sophocles is telling us that Antigone has the intuition to know that the traditional rites of death to please the gods is the proper behavior here. Tiresias, the prophet of the gods, backs up Antigone's actions. When Creon does not bury Polynices, he allows the city to be polluted. The dogs who vomit up the filth, blood, and flesh in Thebes scatter death and disease as do the birds who drop carrion parts on the alters and sacred hearths while they sing songs of horror (1125). The prophet warns Creon that he will suffer great losses because he has:

> Robbed the gods below the earth,
> keeping a dead body here in the bright air,
> unburied, unsung, unhallowed by the rites. (1187-9)

By keeping Polynices' body unburied and in the bright sunlight, Creon robs the underworld gods of a body and a soul that is rightfully theirs. Tiresias does not say that Antigone's actions are wrong or even foolish. We have to conclude that he approves of them and vindicates Antigone because her actions have been correct.

Polynices paid for his errors with death; there is no need for Creon to try to kill him a second time by refusing burial (1141). Neither Creon nor the gods above have any right to interfere with the business of the dead. This is the province of the gods below. When Antigone buried Polynices that second time, she was doing it to bring him to the gates of the underworld as well as doing it to show love for him. When Creon refuses burial, neither Zeus nor the underworld Gods receive their proper due (1403). Creon finally admits that Antigone has been correct to insist on upholding her feminine right to bury Polynices because "it's best to keep the established laws to the very day we die" (Locke 44).

Antigone's role as a woman, the protector of the living family and the dead, and her loyalty to her gods keep her focused on her goal, the right to bury her bother. She is no stranger to pain and the deaths of other family members. In *Antigone*, we see more than just the conflict between Antigone and Creon over whether she must obey his edicts. We see a young woman who knows and honors the laws of the polis as long as they do not interfere with the rights of individuals and families but recognize both. Antigone guards those rights as well as her obligations to the dead though it means sacrificing her life. Creon learns a bitter lesson but learns it too late to save Antigone, Eurydice, Haemon, or even himself. In remaining loyal to her family and her gods by burying Polynices, Antigone loses her life, but she accomplishes what she set out to do. She honors her family, and she gives Polynices the burial which will allow his soul repose.

Joan Davis

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Dust to Dust

August 26, 1988 was an exceptionally humid day in Texas with an incredibly torrid sun searing most of what it touched. It was the day none of us wished to accept, yet all of us knew was inevitable. The melodious ring of "Amazing Grace" revealed the strong voices of friends and family who came together in an observance of a ritual which in some form or another is recognized by most cultures even in the era of post—modernity. The death of my mother was the culmination of eight years of illness. A woman who spoke four languages, who entered Rice University at age sixteen on a dare that she couldn't "stay the course" on a male dominated campus, one who was nurturing, non-judgmental, with an unusual ability to speak extemporaneously. She had been reduced to an invalid without the ability to speak. It was as though the cosmic order had gone awry. The funeral rites were difficult and painful to envision but without question would be carried through in an manner worthy of such a genteel Southern lady.

The grandchildren would carry the casket with youthful strong arms and bleeding tender hearts. From the church to the burial site was a long procession which seemed to encourage a comfortable silence from all. Once the grave side service was complete the funeral director, in the customary manner of his trade, invited the mourners to return to their automobiles. Watching the closing and lowering of the casket is believed to be too painful a process for post-modern man. The family stood firmly together thanking and then encouraging friends to take their leave.

The last rites had been delivered and the camellia petals strewn across the casket. The family would literally bury the coffin one spade full of dust at a time. There was no spoken directive, we all knew how important it was to complete the funeral ritual by this act. Only the three children were involved in this action, as each of us spoke softly yet with conviction and love, of mother. Funeral rites and family rituals are more than the packaged, inane, pre-planned, nonevents that so often occur today. Antigone knew that funeral ritual and family duties were more than simply the act itself. She knew that in fifth century B. C.. Greece; I know that in 1992.

If we all attempt to create order in our lives by using filters born out of some experience and cultural assumptions we have, then it would be given that I do understand Antigone's very passionate need to bury her brother, based on my own family tradition and experience. Dust on my mother's grave is the same dust as was sprinkled on Polynices' grave; we are all inextricably connected.

Certainly Antigone's salient sense of piety is compelling in Sophocles' work. A young woman who had been a companion to her blind father until his death, now faces the deaths of her two brothers and is determined to bury one brother, Polynices, who has been declared a traitor to Thebes by Creon's proclamation. Antigone knows she is not to sprinkle dust on his corpse. Antigone wins sympathetic applause from readers. She is willing to disobey a civil law for her own sense of a higher law, the law of the gods. Connecting to Antigone is simple via her civil disobedience. I understand family and religious rites for the dead as priorities. However, championing the cause for Creon is more difficult. Therefore, my direction in this paper will be to posit a moral role for Creon.

Creon has fallen heir to the throne of post-war Thebes, a chaotic atmosphere aswirl in dust storms, a polis in need of healing. In his first twenty-four hours as ruler his agenda is consumed with establishing law and order. Creon represents the solidarity, the protection, the sense of security that rulers in fifth century Greece would be apt to establish. From John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, a description of the Greece Creon knew:

> ... a governing one, or a governing tribe or caste, who derived their authority from inheritance or conquest, who at all events, did not hold it at the pleasure of the governed, and whose supremacy men did not venture, perhaps did not desire, to contest ... Their power was regarded as necessary ... (5-6)

Earlier, Thomas Hobbs was explicit in his discourse on the function of a government, believing man was unruly, afraid, in search of the protection and stability which authoritarian regimes bring forth. Creon hoped to provide the polis with a rational framework. In Creon's own words:

> My countrymen,
> the ship is safe. The gods who rocked her,
> after a long, merciless pounding in the storm,
> have righted her once more
>
> ....
>
> whoever places a friend
> above the good of his own country, he is nothing (179-82,
> 203-4)

Creon appears to be the prototype of Mills' description of early Greek authorities and Hobbes' canon for the leader providing security. There is not denying his mettle as he speaks on the subject of a traitor:

> These are my principles. Never at my hands
> will the traitor be honored above the patriot. (232-33)

This leader must confront the news that Antigone has indeed sprinkled the dust on her brother's grave, who, in Creon's eyes is a traitor. Upon Antigone's act of defiance, "a great dust storm up from the earth fill[ed] . . . the plain[s]" (464-65). Is this metaphor for the turmoil created when a man enters into civil disobedience?

Haemon, Antigone's betrothed, wants desperately to convince his father that he must free Antigone, not bury her alive. Creon, of course asks for law and order, in the family as well as the state:

> . . . to produce good sons—
> a household full of them, dutiful and attentive (715-16)

Once the blind prophet arrives to speak with Creon the course of the play is thrust forward with great emotion. Antigone kills herself, Haemon is riled by his own sword, and Creon's wife takes her life. With guilt consuming him, Creon laments:

> I don't even exist—I'm no one. Nothing
> . . . Wailing wreck of a man . . . (1446,1463)

In Dr. Randolph's lecture of 29 July he spoke of Karl Jung's belief that "tensions produce the masterpiece." Creon and Antigone share the tension, the despair, the conflict of individual will over state law in order to move toward wholeness and change.

The change will evolve in the 2000 year after this play was written. Perhaps Creon is having been reduced to the dust of despair in his attempt to maintain the state was the catalyst for the development of democratic theory and political science. The view of leader as all powerful will shift. The image of civil disobedience and its dust storm of controversy will be focused. The masterpiece is in process.

Dust on my mother's grave, dust on Polynices' corpse. Dust storms, dust that is blown away, suspended, yet returns. Is dust a metaphor for the process of democracy? Is democracy like dust, natural, fragile, and strong, subject to turmoil, recurring, wonderful and terrible (or to use the Greek word, *deinon*?) The dust of the Sophoclean Greek tragedy is our dust the dust which returns as principled leaders continue in the attempt to bury the corpse of tyranny. For out of Creon's tragic dust emerged new theory in political thought. In the development from Creon to St. Augustine, from Machiavelli to Hobbs, from Rousseau to Hegel, from fifth century to twentieth century dust, we are inextricably connected.

Barbara Donovan

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Mother Dust

With a handful of dust
I have opened your womb and thrust
myself back into you,
Mother.

I know you from before my birth.
I know my grandmother and yours until the first woman
who scraped, with the palm of her hand, a shallow hole
to rock her dead child to dark sleep in the underworld.

And I, without husband, without child, bear our burden of burial,
insist that ritual be followed,
demand our dead have honor:

I, alone, have buried Polynices
with the opening of one finger then another.
Slowly the sand slipped out, glittering like Danae's Zeus
in the moonlight, and your nightshawl covered my tracks.

He must know.

Creon must know he stands against
a mere fistful of dust scattering in the wind,
and he will be destroyed by each grain
that nestles against the stiffening skin.

Grain by grain, Mother made me a mountain without name.
But he must know who defies him, defines him in his sacrilege.
The second dawn brought my head to the mouth

of this cervical cave.
You are the rock that binds me.
You are the rock that releases me.
Collect me as I fall.

In the indefinite dark, I find my umbilical cord,
its slick heaviness slides around my neck.
My fingers know each delicate pulse.

Mother,
receive me.

Danette Bermea

Medea: Pathos Kindled by Eros Inflamed

Defining rhetoric "as a faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (24), Aristotle's fourth century treatise *Rhetoric* framed the foundation for modern persuasion. The book delineated three basic modes: *ethos* or credibility, *pathos* or emotional appeal, and *logos* or logical appeal. Like most Greeks, Aristotle believed in harmony. Just as Plato in *Republic* wanted a balance between *eros* (passion) and *sophia* (wisdom), so Aristotle wanted a balanced application of his modes. Since that time, most ethical communicators have drawn from each of the three dimensions, but a few ruthless orators have used only one, pathos. Euripides' character Medea was such a speaker. Although a social and political outsider, she shrewdly influenced Jason, the state, and its citizenry through rhetorical pathos.

Raymond and Mark Ross, in their book *Understanding Persuasion*, concluded that "Persuasion involves attitudes. Persuasive efforts are directed at creating, changing, or maintaining beliefs and attitudes of others" (9). The communicator Medea followed no particular theory of persuasion. Stephen Toulmin and other logicians based their models on the use of logic, and since Medea relied solely on emotional appeal or pathos, her methods seemed unorthodox. Medea certainly understood the necessity of appealing to her audiences' emotional needs and insecurities to motivate them. She analyzed her audience, playing with their attitudes and their convictions. Ironically, though passion controlled her, Medea, seeking revenge regardless of the cost, deliberately toyed with the emotional weaknesses of others. Motivated by *eros*, she practiced *pathos*.

When the play was first performed before the Athenians, the audience knew the legend of Jason and the Argonauts. Medea's story began when Jason landed in Colchis; she fell in love with him and helped him regain the Golden Fleece. To do so, she murdered her own brother, cutting his body into pieces and strewing them over the sea to distract her father and prevent him from capturing Jason. After Jason and Medea returned to the kingdom of Iolcus and his uncle Pelias cheated Jason of his power, Medea plotted the death of Pelias, forcing both Medea and Jason to flee to Corinth. She was expatriated not only from her own country but also from Jason's. Unfortunately, her plight did not end in Iolcus because she was banished from Corinth, as well.

Certainly, the Athenian audience recognized Medea as an alien with no legal status and as an exotic female. "To be a stranger in a foreign land was, in early times, to have no claim to any protection . . . " (Grube 147). Also, little is known of the life of women during the age, but historians recognized that women were little more than chattel. Antony Andrewes observed, "A woman could not inherit or hold property, or enter into any transaction that involved more than the value of a bushel of grain" (113). Their main obligation was to produce heirs. By all rights, Medea should have been a powerless victim of circumstance.

Even Medea considered herself an outsider. During her first meeting with Jason in the play, she acknowledged that she was "Quite without friends and all alone with my children" (513). Throughout the speech, Medea explained how her betrayal of her father and country, her murder of Pelias, and Creon's decree to expel her from Corinth had created a desperate foreigner. She claimed, "I am cast out of the land and go into exile" (512).

Her ostensibly hopeless situation intensified her rage. Only in her first meeting with Jason did she seem a woman so overcome with jealousy that she was irrational; otherwise, throughout the play she ruthlessly plotted the destruction of her foes. During this encounter, Medea allowed her passion to anger Jason. In doing so, she almost overplayed her hand and lost her advantage. Instead of entreating the receiver to act on his emotions, she became emotional herself. Even at the height of passion, however, Medea was able to cripple Jason's pride, challenging his manhood. Even in the throes of jealousy, Medea used her speech to attack his weaknesses. She screamed, "Oh coward in every way—that is what I call you, / With bitterest reproach for your lack of manliness" (465-466). She employed a tactic commonly referred to among communicators as self-esteem management or the wording of arguments to lower self-esteem.

Other than her first emotional outburst at Jason, the play depicted a Medea cleverly spouting rhetoric which subtly persuaded and wounded him. After attacking his masculinity, she compared his actions to "the worst of all / Human diseases" (471-472). By describing his "shamelessness" (473) with such a metaphor, Medea planted a seed of guilt; she used psychological imagery to force Jason to doubt his choices. At the end of the speech, Medea cunningly phrased her words. Knowing that Jason loved his children, she accused him of hurting them by saying, "That will be a fine shame for the new-wedded groom, / For his children to wander as beggars . . . " (514-515). To a male from a civilized country, the statement that he was beggaring his children would imply he had failed in one of his primary obligations, provider for his family. In each case, Medea's word choices were designed to belittle Jason and to increase his shame. Medea was a character who held no advantages but effectively used her limited resources to become a formidable adversary.

Medea's first words with Jason were nowhere as persuasive and powerful as those in their subsequent confrontations. While her original statements were designed to lower self-esteem, her later rhetoric was devised to control. Throughout their next encounter, Medea pretended remorse for her initial response to his marriage to Glauce. Since Jason embodied the Athenian male's attitude toward women, Medea fueled his underestimation of the weaker sex by calling herself a "fool" (873). She went on to exclaim, "Why am I set against those who have planned wisely? / Why make myself an enemy of the authorities / And of my husband, who does the best thing for me?" (874-876). Finally, Medea claimed, "But we women are what we are—perhaps a little / Worthless; and you men must not be like us in this, / Not be foolish in return when we are foolish" (889-891). Later in the scene, she told Jason, "But a woman is a frail thing, prone to crying" (928). She boosted his male ego by claiming that Glauce would be happy, "... / Having so fine a man as you to share her bed" (953). Because she told him what he wanted and expected to hear, Medea's speech assured Jason that she forgave him. She deceptively exercised the ego-enrichment technique of persuasion. Once again, Medea controlled her audience, despite being an outsider with little power. By convincing him to allow their children to deliver her gifts to his bride, she undermined his trust without his realizing her intentions. Jason left her after stating, "I approve of what you say" (908).

At the end of the play, when Jason learned that he had been tricked, Medea repeated her disease metaphor, once more psychologically implanting the seed of guilt. She justified her murder of their children by blaming Jason. She cried, "They died from a disease they caught from their father" (1364). When he responded, "I tell you it was not my hand that destroyed them" (1365), Medea declared, "But it was your insolence, and your virgin wedding" (1366). By repeating the word your, Medea had successfully intensified Jason's culpability and anguish.

Not surprisingly, Medea's powerful rhetoric fooled her former lover and the father of her children. On the other hand, the audience was probably amazed that Medea so easily exploited great leaders of state. When she addressed Creon, Medea's oratorical plea began with a technique which she had used successfully on Jason. Appealing to Creon as a protector, she compared herself to a ship, "I am utterly lost, / Now I am in the full force of the storm of hate / And have no harbor from ruin to reach easily" (277-279). Both a ruler and a father from a civilized society, Creon felt duty-bound to provide for a defenseless woman and her children. By implying that she faced a storm with no harbor for safety, Medea's metaphor preyed on Creon's enlightened humanity.

Just as she impugned Jason, she challenged Creon's masculinity. Medea accused him of fearing her by saying, "Well, then, are you frightened, Creon, / That I should harm you?" (306-307). Though a strong male, Creon hesitantly admitted that he felt threatened by a woman; thus, Medea convinced him that she would "not raise [her] voice, but submit to [her] betters" (315). Just as she had with Jason, she enriched his ego. Her words prevailed on Creon when she made her request: "Allow me to remain here just for this one day, / So I may consider where to live in my exile" (340-341). Creon was satisfied that Medea had accepted his decision and was no longer a threat to his family or country. She instilled a false sense of security which lulled him into granting her one more day in Corinth.

Creon was not the only example of a head of state influenced by Medea's rhetoric. Aegeus, king of Athens and an old friend of Medea, traveled to Corinth on his return visit with the oracle of Phoebus. After probing the reasons for the trip, Medea learned of his concern for heirs; he and his wife were childless. Immediately, she expressed shared—sympathies, another persuasion tactic, saying, "Well, I hope you have good luck, and achieve your will" (688). In turn, she solicited Aegeus' compassion for her situation declaring, "Jason wrongs me . . . " (692). Continuing to describe his wrongs, Medea grieved "I am ruined. And there is more to come: I am banished" (704). She pleaded, "Have pity on me, have pity on your poor friend" (711). Adroitly maneuvering Aegeus, appealing to his friendship and his humanity, she staged the perfect scene to request his assistance by adding, "So may your love, with God's help, lead to the bearing / of children" (714-715). Knowing that Aegeus desperately wanted children, Medea pleaded with the gods to grant his wish if only he would ". . . not let [her] go into exile desolate, / but receive [her] in [his] land" (712-713). Medea made certain that Aegeus' refusal to help would seem a slap in the face of the gods, something he would never chance for fear of offending them and losing his opportunity for heirs. Again and again, Medea exhibited an understanding of her audience and accordingly selected her words to exploit a weakness.

Not leaving anything to chance, Medea continued to influence Aegeus' decisions. Since she realized that she would need sanctuary after her revenge, she elicited a promise which prevented his withdrawal of support even if he learned of her heinous crimes. Here as before, she used the gods to her benefit, asking him to "Swear by the plain of Earth, and Helius, father / Of my father, and name together all the gods . . . / That you yourself will never cast me from your land" (746-750). Medea left Aegeus no loopholes for retracting his pledge at a future date .

Not content with her control over the leaders, Medea tackled another faction of the populace. She seemed determined to win to her side the women of Corinth who appeared as the Chorus. Early in the play Medea sought to affiliate with her audience and gain the sympathies of these citizens, making them partners in her crime. Pretending to assimilate into their society, she explained:

> Women of Corinth, I have come outside to you
> Lest you should be indignant with me; for I know
> That many people are overproud, some when alone,
> And others when in company. And those who live
> Quietly, as I do, get a bad reputation.
> For a just judgment is not evident in the eyes
> When a man at first sight hates another, before
> Learning of his character, being in no way injured;
> And a foreigner especially must adapt himself. (214-222)

Throughout the speech, Medea sought to divide the loyalties of the women, encouraging them to ally with her as a woman rather than with the men of their state. She remarked, "We women are the most unfortunate creatures" (231). By employing the pronoun *we*, Medea insinuated herself into their group and isolated the women from the men. She claimed that "A man, when he's tired of the company in his home, / Goes out of the house and puts an end to his boredom / But we are forced to keep our eyes on one alone" (244-247). Her rhetoric filled her oratory with inferences that men were the enemy who ignored the plight of women:

> What they say of us is that we have a peaceful time
> Living at home, while they do the fighting in war.
> How wrong they are! I would very much rather stand
> Three times in the front of battle than bear one child. (248-251)

In the end, even though Medea forewarned the women of her purposes, she still gained their pity. Following the scene with Creon, Medea informed the Chorus, "Do you think that I would ever have fawned on that man / Unless I had some end to gain or profit in it?" (368-369). Her persuasive efforts proved successful at the end of the drama when the Chorus failed to warn either Creon or Jason of her violent intentions.

Medea was a master communicator, clever and skilled with her rhetoric. She analyzed her audiences, understood their priorities, and delivered her messages accordingly. After convincing Creon that she was a harmless victim, she poisoned both him and his daughter. Once Jason believed in the sincerity of her acquiescence, she murdered their children. In each case, Medea carefully planned her efforts to avenge the wrongs done to her. Her pathetic appeal, though manipulative, was unequivocally effective.

Consequently, Bernard Knox noted, " . . . [Medea] cannot prevail by brute strength; she must use deceit" (277). Raymond and Mark Ross would doubt the ethics of her strategy because they stated, " . . . no lasting ethical persuasion takes place without honesty" (195). Medea would not have cared; she even told the Chorus, "I know indeed what evil I intend to do, / But stronger than all my afterthoughts is my fury" (1078-1079). Perhaps long before Machiavelli, Medea understood the importance of deception to achieve a goal. She certainly understood her audience's susceptibility to pathos.

Paula Moeller

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Jesus and The Medea

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus said these words to those who asked him what was the greatest commandment. But, of course, many of the words Jesus spoke went unrecorded. On my latest archeological dig in the holy lands, I happened to recover a section of the Gospel according to—not one of the disciples but one of the faithful five hundred of the multitudes who also showed up in the early chapters of Acts—Daniel. According to the beloved Daniel, the above mentioned discussion did take place, but he also records a continuation of the discussion here and in Jesus' story of the good Samaritan. Pieced together and preliminarily translated it goes something like this:

And it came to pass that after Jesus had dismissed the captious asses that passed for the religious learned, but who couldn't recognize that they had one of the great teachers in their very midst because they were too busy guarding their coolers to enjoy the beer, a young Greek named Zacheleass approached the Master and said, "I noticed that neighbor thing you threw in there in your short list of *God's Commandments Greatest Hits* and it brought to mind the mention of neighbors in a play I've been reading for Mr. Stephanos' theater arts class called *The Medea*, by Euripides."

"Yes."

"Have you read it?"

"I believe I ran across it while deserting with John the Baptist and the Essenes. You may remember the group from their top forty hit 'I Like the Locusts, But They Ain't Nothing Without You, Honey.'"

"Yeah, well, whatever, but in my copy, on page 62, the tutor of Medea's kids seems surprised that their nurse hasn't figured out that "everyone loves himself more than his neighbor," and then Euripides has the Nurse saying on the following page that it's just better to be "on equal terms" with your neighbor than to be like Medea, I mean like both above because of her princess—and sorcership and below because of her barbaritude and then a couple rolls on the scroll later Medea says she doesn't think much of anyone who "offends his neighbors" because he's too snotty. Now what I want to know from you, if you'll forgive the prattling preamble, is why all you thinker types are so strung out on this neighbor thing.

"Because you define yourself when you define your neighbor."

"Oh, Jesus. (No offense.)"

"(None taken.)"

"Here we go with one of those teacher answers."

"Okay. Yea verily and whatever, whom do you consider your neighbor in the simplest sense of the word?"

"The dude next door."

"Fine—or Amen—whichever you prefer."

"I like cool."

"Okay, cool. What makes him your neighbor?"

"He lives next to me, you stupe."

"Okay, cool. If he were a member of your family who lived next door, would you call him your neighbor, or your cousin-who-lived-next-door?"

"Probably the cousin thing."

"Probably. Right. Now if he were a Samaritan or a black guy or something, would you call him your neighbor, or the black-guy-who-lives-next-door? Which one do you think?"

"I don't know. Probably 'my neighbor, who's black,' or 'my black neighbor,' or maybe what you said."

"Verily. Then about whom would you simply say 'my neighbor?' He's 'my neighbor.'"

"Oh. I get it. You're trying to make me say it has to be someone just like me—that I can't recognize anyone as just 'my neighbor' unless they're just like me. Is that it?"

"Verily."

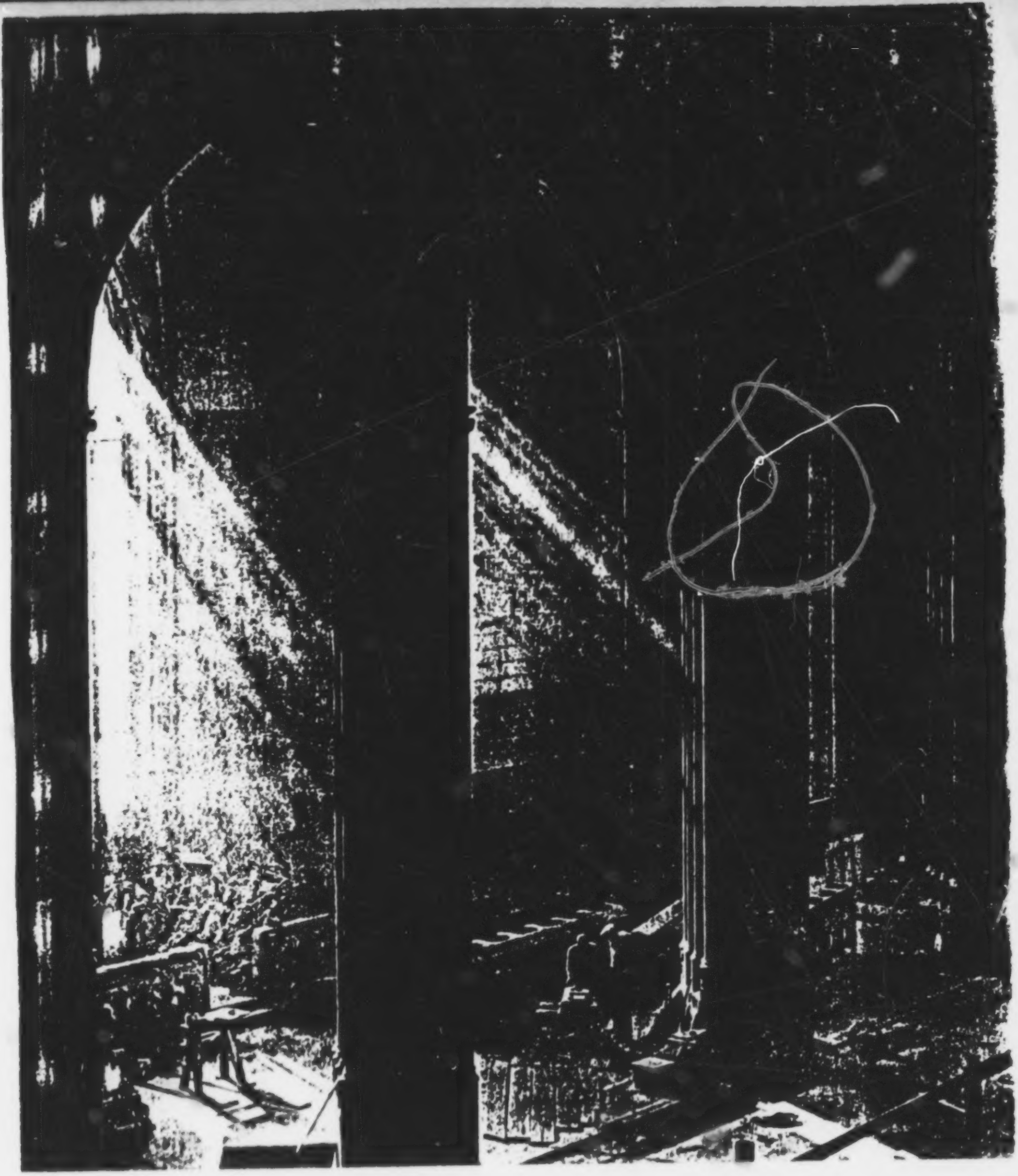
"And that I define myself when I define my neighbor as someone who's not a member of my family but who otherwise has to be just like me?"

"Yea verily."

"And that if I say of someone that his color or religion or social class makes him not my neighbor but simply someone who lives next to me—that I am revealing much more about myself than about him or her?"

"Amen."

Daniel Stevens



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The Renaissance

> These are indeed the crimes of wicked men, yet they spring from that root of error and misplaced love which is born with every son of Adam.
>
> Augustine, *City of God*, XXII 22

"That Perfect Hatred": Anti-Semitism and the Banality of Evil in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*

You cannot live among us as Jews.
You cannot live among us.
You cannot live.

These three lines represent a chilling truth about Western culture. Luther called anti-semitism "that perfect hatred," by which he meant justified hatred of Christ-killers. However, a more historically accurate way to understand this "perfection" is in its tautological completeness; these three lines are a kind of perverted syllogism that perfectly illustrates a brutal truth about our history.

If it could be argued that everyone knows about the Final Solution—*You cannot live*— it is more difficult to find many that could trace the history of how we got there. For example, exactly 500 years ago, Spain expelled its Jews. That of course is the same Spain that commissioned Columbus whose journey and fateful landing we "celebrate" this year. Which of these events do we remember about 1492? Anti-Semitism is a history that often must be read "between the lines."

The Merchant of Venice was written somewhere around 1598, over 300 years after the expulsion of the Jews from England. Jews were ghetto-ized in Venice in 1516 (the term "ghetto" comes from this period and place), expelled in 1571, then re-admitted in 1573. Yet much earlier and throughout Europe, step two—*You cannot live among us*-- had already begun to be overtaken by step 3—*You cannot live*. Elmer Stoll's 1911 essay on Shylock stresses the frenetic popularity of this rehearsal for the Final Solution:

> . . . frightful persecutions, the Jew-burnings, which at times of great emotional exaltation or depression raged through Europe in the

> thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, were almost always popular movements, not instigated or directed by the Church; and princes, kings and emperors, popes like Clement VI, even fanatics like St. Bernard, the Dominicans and Franciscans, had, time and again to interpose between the Jews and the violence of the mob. Converts fared little better than the faithful (163).

Rene Girard, in *The Scapegoat* (1986), indicates that such actions were often fueled by anxiety over the plague, the spread of which was blamed on the Jews. Girard provides a chilling account from a French poet of the mid-fourteenth century that presages more than one attitude relevant to *The Merchant of Venice:*

> After that came a false, treacherous and contemptible swine: this was shameful Israel, the wicked and disloyal who hated good and loved everything evil, who gave so much gold and silver and promises to Christians, who then poisoned several rivers and fountains that had been clear and pure so that many lost their lives . . . He who sits on high and sees far . . . did not want this treachery to remain hidden; He revealed it and made it generally known that they lost their lives and possessions. Then every Jew was destroyed, some hanged, others burned; some were drowned, others beheaded with an ax or sword (qtd. in Girard 22).

This scapegoating of the Jews for the plague co-existed with a valuing of the Jews for their medical acumen. They were not looked on as healers but as workers of evil magic, to be feared but dealt with carefully for one's own interest:

> If a person shows ill will to the Jew, he might infect him with the plague. If, on the other hand, he shows good will, the Jew might spare him or even cure him if he is already stricken. He is therefore seen as the last resource, because of, and not in spite of, the evil he can do or has already done. (Girard 46)

As with Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, "the same men who denounce the witches go to them for help" (Girard 48).

This attitude of prudent use of an evil force seems to have easily made the transition from medicine and health to the new preoccupation of Renaissance Europe: economics. Business and money rather than magic and medicine become the medium of discourse in the era represented in the play. However, the image of the Jew is only in transition, not decline. Anti-Semitism survives intact into this brave new mercantile world.

The Elizabethan audience had just followed the celebrated 1594 trial of Dr. Lopez, attending physician to the Queen, who had been convicted and executed for attempting to poison her. Perhaps in this Lopez case, fear and Jew-hatred once again combined to produce that cleansing scapegoat effect. The Elizabethan audience saw the rise and fall of Antonio's financial fortune following the medieval pattern of magic and witchcraft with which they were so familiar. Antonio's ships seem to hit the rocks just as he makes his "bond with the devil" and reverse promptly on Shylock's defeat. Hence, the presumed magic and malevolence of the Jew that survived in the Elizabethan public's perception of Dr. Lopez could be transferred readily to the realm of commerce in *The Merchant of Venice.*

Perhaps a hermeneutical device can focus the larger context for this reading of the text. The Third Reich's architect of that Final Solution was Adolf Eichmann. He was captured in Argentina and brought to trial in Jerusalem in 1961. There was a philosopher and historian in attendance by the name of Hannah Arendt, a German Jew, whose previous work was the esteemed *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951). Her observations and reflections on Eichmann at the trial and the book they became (*Eichmann in Jerusalem,* 1962) caused her to make an interesting shift in her perception of evil, a concept that was central in her previous work:

> I changed my mind and do no longer speak of "radical evil" . . . It is indeed my opinion now that evil is never "radical," that it is only extreme, and that it possesses neither depth nor any demonic dimension. It can overgrow and lay waste the whole world precisely because it spreads like a fungus on the surface . . . That is its "banality." Only the good has depth and can be radical (*Jew as Pariah* 251-2).

Arendt concludes that Eichmann is the concrete model of her new conception of evil. He was a devoted and loving family man who seemed not over-bothered by his job of orchestrating the killing. He was an efficient bureaucrat who enjoyed the trust and well-curried favor of his boss. He was crucially responsible for the murder of over six million people. However, he insisted that he was not a "devil" as the legal charge would seem to have it. Arendt portrays him as convinced that

> he was not what he called an *innerer Schweinehund,* a dirty bastard in the depths of his heart; and as for his conscience, he remembered perfectly well that he would have had a bad conscience only if he had not done what he had been ordered to do—to ship millions of men,

> women and children to their death with great death with great zeal and meticulous care (Eichmann 25).

In other words, there was no blood dripping from his fangs; between the lines, the reading could be understood as "I am no Jew". Compounding this implicit insult, and doubly a turnabout on his Jewish victims, Eichmann seemed to want to don the mantle of scapegoat and expiate the guilt of the German people. Arendt's analysis, which caused great controversy within the Jewish community and Israeli state, included the observation that the nature and conduct of the trial seemed to help Eichmann achieve this sacrificial status (Eichmann 247-48). It was what Arendt called the "Eichmann in every one of us" approach in which

> the defendant is taken as a symbol and the trial as a pretext to bring up matters which are apparently more interesting than the guilt or innocence of one person ...that [as asserted by his lawyer Servatius] he was brought to book because a scapegoat was needed, not only for the German Federal Republic, but also for the events as a whole, [for] anti-Semitism and totalitarian government as well as for the human race and original sin (286).

This sentiment of Eichmann and his defense was perhaps shared by much of the observing world. It compares interestingly with Antonio's 'sacrificial lamb' sentiments in his final words before the aborted execution:

> Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you
> For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
> Than is her custom; it is still her use
> To let the wretched man outlive his wealth
> To view with hollowed eye and wrinkled brow
> An age of poverty; from which ling'ring penance
> Of such misery doth she cut me off. (4.1.265)

If Eichmann had known his Shakespeare, there could scarcely be a more pathetic eulogy to be self-delivered. As with Antonio, Eichmann's Jew-hatred would have stayed well-masked by this absurd and grandiose pathos. The words Eichmann did choose at the gallows included similar banal sentiments, calling on loyalty and fate. Arendt concludes that his remarks epitomized his "word-and-thought-defying banality of evil" (Eichmann 252). To clarify this almost surprising quality of banality, Arendt employs an enlightening series of Shakespearean comparisons:

> . . . when I speak of the banality of evil, I do so only on the strictly

> factual level, pointing to a phenomenon which stared one in the face at the trial. Eichmann was not Iago and not Macbeth, and nothing would have been farther from his mind than to determine with Richard III 'to prove a villain'. Except for an extraordinary diligence in looking out for his personal advancement, he had no motives at all.(287)

Eichmann's banality was unnervingly effective. One of the half-dozen psychiatrists who interviewed him was reported to have said, after pronouncing him sane and normal: "More normal, at any rate, than I am after having examined him." If normality can deny and dislocate historical memory as effectively as it did for Eichmann, is that not a call for the deepest suspicion of the banal, including in the character of Antonio? *The Merchant of Venice* is well-described by Arendt's phrase "banality of evil", at least because its principal "comic" Christian characters bear a striking resemblance to Eichmann, not in some universal sense of original sin, but in their all too common particular and vicious anti-Semitism masquerading as justice and good citizenship. With Arendt's concept of banality of evil as lens, this subtly hidden layer of the text emerges for clearer viewing.

It would be hard to imagine more frivolous banality than exhibited by the likes of the chattering Gratiano, the clueless Bassiano, the pathetically melancholy Antonio. However scratch the surface of this banality and the cruelty beneath is evident. This "creeping fungus" of banal evil is especially vicious in the snarling mouth of the supposedly happy-go-lucky Gratiano. His incessant, clownish chatter in the opening act and his playful complicity in courtship in the Belmont scenes give way to harrowing taunts at the trial. His first words there are a veiled threat of violence (123-126), followed by his favorite anti-Semitic epithet: the Jew as dog. Gratiano does not stop at epithet but spits out a whole racial theory, confessedly pagan, to prove the bestial nature of the Jew:

> Thou almost makes me waver in my faith,
> To hold opinion with Pythagoras
> That souls of animals infuse themselves
> Into the trunks of men. Thy currish spirit
> Governed a wolf who hanged for human slaughter
> Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
> And whilst thou layest in thy unhallowed dam,
> Infused itself in thee; for thy desires

Are wolfish, bloody, starved and ravenous. (128-139)

Here Gratiano prefigures all the pseudo-science and inane racial theories that the Nazis found so helpful in preparing their empire for holocaust, the same sorts of banal racism of shallow minds that other countries, other peoples, have found so convenient for various forms of oppression, slavery and murder.

In the next lines, Shylock lets us know both that he is used to this calumny and that Gratiano did not mutter this involved insult under his breath, but verily shouted it:

Till thou canst rail the seal from of my bond
Thou but offendest thy lungs to speak so loud,
Repair thy wit, good youth . . . (139-141)

Gratiano recovers from his apoplexy a bit later to repeat his "currish Jew" epithet followed, after Portia's legal sleight-of-hand in which she defeats Shylock, with incessant parroting of the phrases he heard Shylock say when things were going the Jew's way. He takes particular delight in deriding Shylock's biblical reference to Daniel: "I thank you Jew for teaching me that word" (340). Gratiano's perverse delight can barely contain itself as his veiled threat from the beginning of the trial becomes a demand for execution. In his parting shot as the Jew exits, he spits out his preference for the "gallows, not the [baptismal] font" for the debased Shylock (399). Could there be more classic anti-Semitic venom than in this most foppish of Venetians? And all of it delivered in court of law, with no reproach from the powers that be, for those powers were in happy complicity with those merchant insiders who needed their outsiders, their Jew-hatred to deflect the scrutiny their ways deserved.

In contrast to Gratiano's preference for the twisted-anthropologist "Jew as animal" theory, Solanio, speaking during the negotiations with Shylock, chooses the supernatural term of favor: 'the Jew as devil'. Being a more diplomatic Venetian than his chum Gratiano, Solanio reserves the epithet, which he applies to Tubal as well as Shylock, for asides to Salerio (3.1.19,74). Bassanio also prefers this classic association of Jew as Satan when (while raising Portia's eyebrows with his pledge of primary loyalty to Antonio) he bemoans the imminent reality of having to deliver his friend to "this devil" (4.1.286). Earlier in this same scene, Bassanio had simply called Shylock's "will" the devil (117). It has been suggested above that these are neither casual curses nor detached judgments: these men consciously if reluctantly did business with a person they actually believed to be of Satan. Their hateful words are as much full of anguish at their sullied hands given in bargain with the devil as they are full of disdain for the Jew's 'depravity.'

It is with Antonio that the banality of evil is most richly drawn. Shylock himself is the accuser and the accused revels in the charge. While the deal is being struck, Shylock recounts how Antonio has consistently berated him in the public exchange rehearsing the usual charges of "misbeliever, cutthroat dog" and even spitting on him (1.3.107ff). Such a personal affront (which Antonio, with his next breath, promises to repeat) can only conceivably be tolerated between men doing business if one remembers that charges such as infidel and throat-cutter (referring to the blood libel of Jews killing Christian children and drinking their blood) were taken seriously and absolutely believed at many points and places in European history. There is a power in this rhetoric that both reflects and shapes social reality in a way that Machiavelli described and promoted for public life. Antonio represents this well.

In spite of these vicious moments, Antonio's threat of choice is Christianization (1.3.175), the more civilized and most banal of anti-Semitic approaches. When he gets the upper hand of Shylock at the sentencing, he knows exactly where to twist the knife on his old adversary, encouraging the Duke to only forfeit to Antonio half of Shylock's worth, the other half to be his until death, at which time it goes to his newly baptized daughter's husband! His speech pretends a mercy that his actions cruelly betray. It was Solanio that characterized Antonio in a way that was meant to describe his moods but can be seen in a larger way as describing the duplicity that he proudly wore as citizenship: " . . . Now by two headed Janus / Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time" (1.1.50).

Perhaps the most interesting utterances in this 'comedy' are not self-serving rhetoric in the guise of pious citizenship, but rather self-parodying babble put in the mouth of the servant. Lancelot is an outsider who is nobody's fool and really knows 'which way the wind blows.' He treats us to the peregrinations of his conscience in quite recognizable terms: self-preservation. Young Gobbo's internal dialogue makes up in humor what it lacks in 'backbone' when compared to another great scene of decision, Huck Finn on his raft debating with his conscience about whether or not to turn in Jim as a runaway slave. Launcelot makes the opposite decision from Huck and betrays Shylock, but at least he has his language straight: conscience counsels fidelity and "the fiend," counsels covering one's rear (2.2.18-30). Launcelot illustrates his choice clearly in the biblical story he plays out with his father: old blind Isaac giving his blessing and fortune to the deceitful son. Jacob masquerading as Esau was never given so light a touch as Launcelot's (or is it Gobbo or Good Gobbo or Good Master

Gobbo?) This playful identity crisis has its serious side. It is not idle talk when Launcelot, after the Isaac / Jacob-like blessing from his father, says "Truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long—a man's son may, but in the end truth will out" *(78-81). Still, with the survivor/outsider's instinct at preventing further marginalization* (at least for the present), Launcelot concludes, as Bassanio approaches to employ him, that he will go which way the wind blows: "To him, father, for I am a Jew if I serve the Jew any longer" (112-13). This perceptive fool already senses the message of his age to the Jew: Y*ou cannot live*.

Among the female characters, the banality of evil is most fully evident in Portia, but with a complexity communicated to us in her opening scene. Her cynicism and hypocrisy regarding morality that is laid bare in her courtroom rhetoric, is tempered by an early recognition that she might have more integrity. Noting that her "little body is aweary of this great world" (1.2.1-2), she sighs: ". . . I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than to be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching." She over-romanticizes the society of Venice but does describe it as paradox as she continues: "The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree; such a hare is madness the youth to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple" (15-20).

Yet, onward with the business of deception in choosing a husband, says she, and it is a track she does not abandon even after husband is chosen. She is wickedly funny with her capsule dismissals of her various suitors, superficial in her petty prejudices, hilarious, almost slapstick in her infatuation with the mercenary, good ol' boy Bassanio. All the suitor scenes including Bassanio's should be played in high comic style, stressing the superficiality of these supposedly free people dancing to such a rigidly choreographed score. Freedom seems available only as game; it comes to Portia with the chance for more deceit (the trial) and sadistic testing (the rings). It is a measure of the vacuity as well as the banality of Bassanio and Gratiano that, in the final scene, they seem to chuckle right along with the outrageous conceit of the ring, not really in touch with the motive for the test. It looks like a game, a great charade like the parade of masks on the street next to Shylock's house. It is perhaps an example of the banality of evil writ small in the games people play, even with their lovers.

Putting the fairyland of Belmont aside, it is in Venice that we see Portia as Arendt's banality of evil might have us see her. Her mouthing of platitudes about mercy and her hypocrisy in being ruthless in judgment on Shylock (allowing the unlikely Duke to look good in backing off execution) would scarcely be worth pointing out if her "quality of mercy" speech had not been taken so seriously for so long. Of course, that history of interpretation is consistent with the anti-Semitism that caricatures Judaism as a religion of damned legalism, Christianity as possessed of tender mercies, falling "as the gentle rain from heaven"(4.1.184). The admiration of Portia could perhaps endure because not once does she call the Jew "dog", or "devil" or "infidel." But how could one over look her "Tarry, Jew!" and all the terror that surrounds it. She came to save Antonio and test her husband Bassanio, but while she is in town, she may as well kill a Jew. Her ruthless judgment is pronounced with all the blithe banality of serving a meal, like the one at the end of Act III in which Launcelot's comments about Jewish converts raising the price of pork is the anti-Semitic subtext for the setting of the table: "... for your coming into dinner, sir, why let it be as humors and conceits shall govern" (3.5.61-3). As for Portia, mistress of Belmont and master of "humors and conceits," could there be greater irony in word or in situation than her interruption of the clueless Bassanio (still trying to offer Shylock money after his defeat): Soft! The Jew shall have all justice. Soft, no haste; He shall have nothing but the penalty. (319-21)

It is left to Shylock to be the agent of revelation of the banality of evil, a reality to which he fell victim at birth and has sponged from his Jewish gabardine all his life. He has many powerful words, words that clearly have caused his character to transcend the other forgettable (but for their cruelty) characters and allowed Shylock to really be the enduring heritage of the play. One of his more prophetic pronouncements occurs at the beginning of the trial, in response to the Duke's hypocritical question, again, about mercy. Shylock confronts the Venetians with their own practice of slavery. He challenges them to show this highly vaunted "mercy" in their treatment of their slaves:

> Let them be free! Marry them to your heirs!
> ... Let their beds be made as soft as yours, and let
> their palates be seasoned with such viands(4.1.94-97).

Shylock then accurately predicts the Venetian response: "The slaves our ours" (98). This indictment of Antonio and his ilk is not corrupted and legalistic self-serving Judaism; Shylock's words are representative of the best of the prophetic tradition! This is Amos saying : "I spurn your feasts and your burnt offerings." This is the sensibility honed by that profound and incessant refrain in the Torah: "Remember when you were slaves in Egypt ...," the reminder that constantly called the Jews away from injustice.

The power of Shylock in the trial scene has confused some readers about the meaning and relevance of the play's last act. However, it is that act that provides the definitive commentary on the purgative, redeeming effect of Shylock's defeat. If he is effective as scapegoat, things must take a turn for the better. In an era of the ascendancy of a culture of commerce, fear of failure must be allayed by a sign that all threats to success are under control. This fear had surfaced in the play with all the nail-biting over the fate of Antonio's "argosies," and this fear of failure in an increasingly competitive mercantile age was at least as haunting as was physical illness to a previous age. The resolution of that anxiety requires, as it always had, the purging of the "dangerous Jew." The assumption is that the Jew's curse, whether in the poisoning of wells or the holding of bonds for business loans, is responsible for our crisis; the crisis can be resolved only by neutralizing the Jew. The dispensing with Shylock at the trial prefigures the magical safe return of Antonio's ships and is simultaneously the signal for the dispensability of the Jews. Does not the banality of Act V represent both the smug triumph of commerce and triumph over the Jew once and for all? This whole history of forced conversion, banishment and extermination, moving inexorably towards its Final Solution, is the chilly backdrop for this 'warm comedy of manners' known as *The Merchant of Venice*.

Shylock does indeed slide from the role of prophet and, in his vengeful obsession with Antonio's pound of flesh, falls towards being just another slave-mongering Venetian. It is a tragic acquiescence in which we recognize the fateful drama of assimilation. Shylock's accommodation to the ways of his oppressors—"The villainy you teach me I will execute"(3.1.68) —is fueled by the pain of his daughter's betrayal; she, like her father, simply wants to become a "good" Venetian, although they kneel at different ends of that city's nihilism. Shylock attempts to imitate the age's ruthless business dealings. Jessica falls for the seduction of the age's nascent consumerism and for the tinning of incessant carnival, which her father astutely brands "... the sound of shallow fopp'ry" (3.5.35) that has her buy a monkey with a family heirloom, hence aping the disdain for family that comes with the new post-Christian religion of commerce. All is now merchandise and, as Machiavelli is said to have observed of this age and Jessica tragically foreshadows: "Man forgets more easily the death of his father than the loss of his money."

Shylock wants not the horror of conversion, but just to become a merchant of Venice. Such enfranchisement is an impossible demand that he seeks through the

absurd, ill-fated means of a pound of Christian merchant flesh. Shylock wants it anyway because it is "dearly bought"
(4.1.100). These words "dearly bought" bespeak a people's bitter history, and are spoken with such pain and rage by Shylock that they can stand as the eloquent lament for the dashed hopes and crushed lives of millions who, especially after Emancipation and the promise of citizenship, bought into the hopes of assimilation almost to the gates of the death camps. He finishes the profoundly prophetic appeal of this passage with the truest of claims: "I stand for judgement" (4.1.104), and it is an historic judgement that, in spite of its tragic flaw, blasts the pretense from the establishment's sham rhetoric about 'mercy'.

The specific tragedy of Shylock and Jessica within this Shakespearean comedy can be focused by another of Hannah Arendt's hermeneutical insights. In several essays collected in the book T*he Jew as Pariah*, she discusses the two paths open to Jews after 19th Century Emancipation in Germany. One path is as conscious *pariah*, the other is social *parvenu*.. This latter is the path of assimilation, the "upstart" option to be a "good German" or "good European" that so many Jews so fatefully decided to do with the onset of relative tolerance. The *parvenu* has faith not only in the possibility of full citizenship for the Jew but, at least implicitly, a belief in the compatibility of that citizenship with the Jewish tradition. The *pariah* , on the other hand, believes that Jewishness and mainstream political culture are incompatible. This *pariah* option insists on remaining the outsider, a social outcast and a rebel but not quiescent or apolitical. "Conscious pariahs," according to Arendt, are

> those who did most for the spiritual dignity of their people, who were great enough to transcend the bounds of nationality and to weave the strands of their Jewish genius into the general texture of European life . . . those bold spirits who tried to make of the emancipation of the Jews that which it really should have been—an admission of Jews as Jews to the ranks of humanity, rather than a permit to ape the gentiles, or an opportunity to play the *parvenu*. (Jew as Pariah 18)

Shylock is not the prototypical *parvenu*; that he is not "aping" anyone is best symbolized by his profound lament that he would not trade the turquoise ring he received as a present from his wife "for a wilderness of monkeys" (2.2.115). If he can be seen as falling into the assimilationist trap through his obsession with revenge, he went down swinging and landed not a few telling blows.

Yet how much more inspiring and universal is this lesson of the particular history of his beleaguered people, the courageous example especially of the confirmed outsiders among them who cannot be compromised, will not assimilate and hence are truly free to do that "cultural weaving" Arendt talked about and embodied. Perhaps this "conscious pariah" is not too dissimilar from the citizens of Augustine's City of God, who stand outside the compromises and abuses of the City of Man but roll up their sleeves and actively contribute that which humanity needs most: acceptance, nurture and celebration of self and community in all the richness of each particularity, woven into the struggle of daily life. By avoiding the insider track of power including its weapons, citizenship becomes reliably detached from conformity and the banal evil it brings with it. The outsider is then free to bring conscience and its uniquely humanizing power to bear on this human condition, to deepen this banal human community that is so afflicted with Luther's "perfect hatred" and with what Augustine calls "misplaced love." Down through the centuries, this rootless goodness desperately seeks, demands, cries out for a truer home.

Jim McGarry

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The More You Know, the Moor You May Not Know

In a court of law, often the most provocative, conclusive, and damning evidence is provided by eye-witnesses—people who emphatically assert that they did visually witness the incident in question. Unfortunately, many innocent people have been falsely accused and punished because the connection between what the eyes see and what the brain assimilates can be fallible. (What you see is not necessarily what you get.) Shakespeare understood the limitations of vision as a trustworthy advisor. He magnifies the ramifications of blind obedience to sight in *Othello*. Each central character in some fashion is guilty of myopia, and this myopia, generally nurtured by Iago's insidiousness, eventually leads to each character's demise. Shakespeare's characters do not have sole possession of this flaw; rather, they reflect humanity's often tragic and unjust allegiance to the eyes.

Often in Shakespeare's plays, circumstances in the state or atmosphere parallel those of the individuals. In *Julius Caesar* the lightning storms presage the civil unrest as represented by Brutus and the conspiracy. In *Othello*, Shakespeare provides a parallel to Iago's sinister plot to "undo" the hated Moor and his first Lieutenant. In scene 3 of Act I, a senator comments on the Turk's military maneuvering by saying, "By no assay of reason. / Tis a pageant / To keep us in false gaze" (18-19). The Turkish fleet's attempted subterfuge fails to deceive the Duke and his senators, primarily because they thoroughly consider what their eyes behold, and then they scrutinize that vision in terms of military tactics. Iago, like the Turks, manifests a specter for Othello, as well as all the other characters, to gaze upon; unfortunately for Iago's victims, they are not aware of who the enemy is, so they are helpless in interpreting what they see. They all fall victim to a well-crafted illusion.

Brabantio, Desdemona's father, unwittingly collaborates with Iago in the construction of his illusion. First, he makes an incredibly insightful comment concerning the nature of man as opposed to nature itself. When attempting to rationalize his daughter's elopement with Othello, he states, "For nature so preposterously to err, / Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense / Sans witchcraft could not" (1.3.62-64). Brabantio argues that because nature is not blind, obviously to Othello's blackness, then witchcraft must be responsible for what he considers Desdemona's betrayal. Juxtaposed to nature's acuity is Brabantio's myopia. Perhaps nature sees clearly that two people of different color can be together. Brabantio, who relishes Othello as a mysterious, romanticized traveler, abhors the thought of Othello as a son-in-law. It's regrettable that Brabantio can not see his new relation as the Duke suggests: "If virtue no delighted beauty lack, / Your son-in-law is far more fair than black" (1.3.291-92). Brabantio's does not restrict his myopia to just Othello; it immediately and erroneously focuses on his daughter. He first warns fathers in general: "Father's from hence trust not your daughter's minds / By what you see them act" (1.2.171-72). Ironically, Othello does "trust" Desdemona's mind by what he sees her act. Othello could have even applied Brabantio's advice to Iago, but instead, he trusts Iago's "honesty." Brabantio fails to realize that his daughter, albeit guilty of marrying behind his back, has lost no nobility of character. Finally, Brabantio issues a terse warning to Othello personally, and unknowingly he plants the seed which Iago cultivates. Brabantio warns, "Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see / She has deceived her father, and may thee" (1.3.294-95). Clearly Othello does "look to her," but he sees superficially. Brabantio first suggests that Desdemona is capable of deceit, which makes Iago's later intimations more accessible to Othello's ears.

Iago sees to it that Othello does "look to her," and his villainy lucidly reveals Shakespeare's emphasis on vision and visual imagery. Iago attempts to imprint visual images so starkly into his victim's minds that they, for lack of comparable images, are easily manipulated by Iago's interpretations of those visions. How ironic and just that her father, who first suggests Desdemona is deceitful, is the first victim of Iago's treachery. Through the use of visual imagery, Iago provokes Brabantio into a frenzy by telling him, "Even now, now, very now, an old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe" (1.1.88-89). He further concedes that when his daughter conceives, "you'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse / you'll have nephews neigh to you, / you'll have courses for cousins, and jennets [black ponies] for germans" (1.1.111-113). He paints such a vivid picture in Brabantio's mind that Brabantio can't help but be appalled at these ghastly images. The total effect of his exacerbation of Brabantio is to inconvenience and disturb Othello—much like an ax-man who marks the spot where he'll deliver repetitive blows.

Iago's next dupe is Roderigo, whom he lures into service by capitalizing on two variations of vision. One, he convinces Roderigo that Desdemona will eventually look elsewhere for love: "Her eye must be fed, and what delight shall she have to look on the Devil"? (2.1.227-30) Roderigo deludes himself that perhaps Desdemona will turn her eyes on him. Earlier in the play, Brabantio admits that Desdemona falls in love "with what she feared to look on"! (1.3.98) Roderigo begins to see himself as a viable alternative to the Moor, but Iago surreptitiously reminds him that Cassio is also a suitor. He questions, "Did thou not see her paddle [play] with the palm of his hand? / Didst not mark that"? (2.1.258-59) Well, certainly he had seen it, but he responds that he saw nothing but common courtesy, so Iago reinforces his theory by providing the visual imagery: "They met so near with their lips that their breaths embraced together" (2.1.264-265). Being bereft of morals and easily plied, Roderigo falls for Iago's assertions. He sees things only as Iago interprets them, just like Othello, and he eventually pays with his life.

Subtly, Iago also works on Cassio to discern his mind. After Desdemona and Othello have retired for the evening, Iago and Cassio strike up a conversation with Desdemona as the topic. "What an eye she has!" Iago states, "Methinks it sounds a parley to provocation" (2.3.22-23). Cassio responds "An inviting eye, and yet me thinks right modest" (2.3.24-25). Shakespeare continually focuses on the eye as not only a receiver, but also a broadcaster. Iago's intent may be to convince Cassio that Desdemona is desirous of him. Cassio, he seems to be saying, do you note the beauty in her eye and how her eye is trained on you? Iago wants Cassio to feel flattered, and he does want to procure evidence against and insight into Cassio, as well as perhaps predispose Cassio to petition Desdemona for restoration with Othello, an act which tints Othello's envy a darker shade of green.

Unfortunately for Cassio, immediately after this brief conversation with Iago, Iago directs Montano's eyes to Cassio: "You see this fellow that is gone before / He is a soldier fit to stand by Caesar / And give direction. / And do but see his vice" (2.3.126-128). Of course, Montano would not have seen Cassio or known about his vice of drunkenness had Iago not flashed it on the screen. Montano then assumes that "Perhaps [Othello] sees [Cassio's drunkenness] not, or his good nature / Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio / And looks not on his evils" (2.3.138-140). In Montano, Iago engenders a benign eye-witness who can reveal that which Iago seeks to reveal. After having directed Montano's eyes towards Cassio, he then unveils the contrived but very convincing scene of Cassio and Roderigo's skirmish. Montano's intervention on Roderigo's behalf and brief conflict with Cassio provides another visual assault on Cassio's character which Iago, having witnessed the entire event, is "forced" to divulge to Othello. Cassio inadvertently aids Iago in his scheme by shunning public interaction with Bianca. Cassio tells her "And think it no addition, nor my wish, / To have him see me womaned" (3.4.193-194). One can only guess how Othello might have reasoned had he seen Cassio with his true paramour.

The brunt of Iago's manifestations of visual deception obviously affect

Othello the most, partly because Othello wants visual proof so badly. Othello gives Iago a clear mandate when Iago first implies that Desdemona is unfaithful: "Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore / Be sure of it, give the ocular proof. / Make me to see't or at the least so prove it" (3.3.359-360). Already the reader sees this statement as ironic because Iago has already distorted and controlled Othello's vision. Repeatedly, he refers to Iago as an honest man. He says of Iago, "This honest creature doubtless / Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds" (3.3.241-242). Here, at least, Othello is partially correct. Iago does see and know much more than he lets on, but Othello believes his knowledge concerns Desdemona's infidelity.

Iago does provide ocular proof, some tangible and some imaginary. Having already predisposed Othello to jealously, Iago conjures a graphic image for Othello to mull over:

> Damn them then
> If mortal eyes do see them bolster
> More than their own!
>
> . . . .
>
> It is impossible you should see this,
> Were they prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,
> as salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross
> As ignorance made drunk. (3.3.395-405)

This sexually charged animalistic image of his wife engaged in carnal lust pierced Othello's mind and his contentment, but in itself would not have been conclusive. Othello reiterates his demand for proof to Iago: "Give me a living [tangible] reason she is disloyal" (3.3.410). Had Othello not been so anxious to see tangible evidence of Desdemona's indiscretion, he might not have been so easily swayed by that which is presented, and much more is presented. Iago's screenplay has just begun. He projects pictorials into Othello's mind by recollecting a particularly intimate dream Cassio acts in his sleep while Iago, as a witness, watches in amazement. Incredulously, after this revelation, Othello has already pronounced judgement. "Now do I see 'tis true." he admits, "Look here, Iago, / All my fond love thus do I blow to Heaven" (3.3.444-445). The reader wonders how Othello can profess to see when it is clear he is using Iago's eyes and not his own.

Taking a lesson from Antony's memorable funeral oration in *Julius Caesar*, Iago refuses to unleash Othello's anger until he can be sure no desperate appeals can satiate him. Antony provokes the crowd to anger by creating mental images. He reminds the Roman crowd, "You all did see that on the Lupercal, I thrice presented him a kingly crown, which he did thrice refuse" (3.2.100-101). Since Caesar's motives were not visible, Antony simply implies Caesar's motives through his actions, and the simple minded, gullible crowd accepts the images and Antony's interpretation of them. Antony holds the crowd in check while he presents the actual body of Caesar, in bloody, ghastly detail, and then the will of Caesar. The crowd becomes so mutinous, that upon finally having heard the will, nothing can mitigate their violence.

Iago mimics Antony. Iago, having first created the visual imagery of Cassio and Desdemona bestially fornicating, next cements those images with his own "corpse" and "will." The first, of course, is the constant reminder of Cassio's slinking away from the courtyard rendezvous with Desdemona. Othello sees that with his own eyes, yet he sees the suspect nature of it through Iago's eyes. The second concrete vision Iago grafts to Othello's mind is the conversation between Iago and Cassio regarding Bianca, which Othello sees with his eyes and hears with his ears, but he is completely deaf and blind to the truth. In this scene Shakespeare's attentiveness to visual representation is clearly evident. Iago instructs Othello to note Cassio's smiles, gestures, and body language. Cassio's words are not as important as his actions, which Othello so egregiously misconstrues. Then, the main body of evidence is flung into Othello's face. Bianca angrily hurls the handkerchief at Cassio, and Iago's work is done. The painting of the "green-eyed monster" is complete. Not even the honest eye-witness testimony of Emilia, who tells Othello that she witnessed all of Desdemona's encounters with Cassio and never saw impropriety, can dissuade the Moor. Locked in his bedroom with intent to kill, Othello defends his murderous thoughts by telling Desdemona, "By Heaven, I saw my handkerchief in 's hand" (5.2.62). A second time he makes the same statement: "I saw the handkerchief" (5.2.66) He even tells Emilia after Desdemona dies, "I saw it in his hand" (5.2.215). Tis true he sees it, but he is always wearing Iago's glasses.

Clearly everyone in the play is guilty of wearing Iago's glasses. Desdemona, Emily, Cassio, Othello, Roderigo, and Montano all see Iago as an honest man, and they importune him to assist their respective endeavors. They are all blind to Iago's perniciousness and deceitfulness. Emilia is the only character who suspects foul play; in fact, she astutely analyzes the "villain" who must be behind the dreadful lies, but she never puts her husband's face on the villainy. It is hard to fault their gullibility, since Iago did create a masterful lie, but had they relied on more than just the way things seemed, Iago's lie might not have been so successful.

Many of today's common phrases, such as "I'll believe it when I see it" and "Seeing is believing" are rendered obsolete in conjunction to Shakespeare's use of vision in Othello. Each main character allows Iago to adjust the focus of his / her eyesight. Indeed Shakespeare seems to indicate that relying on outward appearances alone is unwise. Othello's myopia, as well as the other characters', is no more culpable than modern society's penchant for allowing gender, color, dress, style, and physical differences to dictate their actions and opinions. How many children see an individual different from themselves and hear their parents disparage the difference? How many white adults see a group of young Hispanics and immediately assume "gang?" How many teachers see a poorly dressed, slouching student and limit their expectations? How often do people see through the spectacles of their peers, their parents, their prejudices, and even their enemies. Perhaps most notorious for impersonating an optometrist is the modern media. Often, the media projects images which are inculcated into the minds of the public as truth, regardless of the veracity of the image. Iago states that "Men should be what they seem" (3.3.127), but he isn't what he seems, and many men today are not what they seem, or not what they are represented to be. It is the individual's responsibility to look beneath the facades men create and judge a man's true merit. Judging "not wisely" can engender many results, including tragic ones, as *Othello* so poignantly depicts.

Carey Christenberry

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The Silken Shield of Innocence

Other than our present time, it is difficult to find a more sophisticatedly malicious period in history than the Renaissance. And what better setting for deft duplicity and destruction than the Italian city-state of Venice? An innocent entering the socio-political fray might not survive to realize the benefits of empowerment even if he had the great luck to earn the protection of the politically powerful. (Observe Machiavelli's imprisonment and torture and subsequent release upon his return to fickle favor [Bull 16].) In this setting, Shakespeare's *Othello* tells us of Othello and Desdemona, two who believe themselves to be loving and loved, but who fall prey to a "fine Italian hand" as a skillful malcontent seduces them with the slight of hand of friendship. (Two other characters, Emilia and Roderigo, although not entirely guiltless, yet unaware of the terrible truth of revenge, are incapable of protecting their bodies and souls.) Both Desdemona and Othello are ignorant not only of the rules of Iago's game but even of the fact that the game is afoot. For them, innocence is not the best defense.

When we meet Othello, he is a serenely secure leader of soldiers whose accomplishments are renowned. The magnetism of his retold adventures attracts Desdemona, and she becomes fascinated with this exotic male figure so unlike the eligible bachelors of Venice. She does not truly know him, but only of him, so she cannot be making a considered judgment of his qualities as a future husband. One may argue that women during the Renaissance had every right to accept or reject their prospective mates, but no women of high rank had the social mobility and, therefore, the opportunity to investigate personally the characters of all possible suitors. Her rash decision to elope is a measure of her naiveté. That Othello is flattered by her abject admiration is a measure of his. In explaining Desdemona's uncoerced marriage to her irate father and the Duke, Othello says, "She loved me for the dangers I had passed, / And I loved her that she did pity them" (1.3.166-167). Brabantio has been a frequent and gracious host to Othello and has thrilled to tales of the general's soldierly exploits while Desdemona listened to them as well (127-152). Unless Brabantio is completely insensitive, he must realize that these are the stories of which maidens' dreams are fashioned. Even the Duke remarks, "I think that this tale would win my daughter too" (170). Although he "loved" (127) Othello, this cautious father was also sifting through suitors, and he is the character who wryly confers on them the appellation "wealthy, curled darlings" (1.2.67). He has already rejected Roderigo (1.1.93-95) who, it turns out, is a devious dolt, certainly not the material for a husband. The eager couple are ingenuous, but they are not unaware that conscientious Brabantio may make some objections, not all of them necessarily racist, to their wedding. Their romantic elopement is certainly exciting, but Brabantio is shocked, and the mist of his sleepy confusion is condensed into anger by Iago's shouts of obscene imagination (74-137). Othello never suspects that his battlefield confidante might leak the news of his marriage, much less exacerbate the situation before he and Desdemona have the chance to tell Brabantio. So it is that the mature but unsuspecting lovers run off romantically "in haste" to, unfortunately, "repent in leisure." Othello then entrusts his adoring bride to Iago, a man of "honesty and trust" (1.3.279-280) for the voyage to Cyprus; ironically, in that act he is, unwittingly, wise because Iago wants nothing more than to lead the two lambs from the security of the fold (390-395).

After a breathtakingly blessed victory, Othello is reunited with his eager bride, and he has no room in his heart for wariness. Why should he? A man who has been soldiering since the age of seven (82-85) surely has seen it all, and has nothing more to fear, yet such an heroic figure has a great deal to learn about the ordinary ways of the human psyche. He has faced every kind of monstrous foe and survived all natural and artificial onslaughts (133-144). He has literally stood tall in battle, with the stalwart ensign Iago ever at his side, an inspiration to his troops. What, then, can be his flaw? Why, if his love is so open, so childlike, so undoubted, does he fall prey to such a trivial event as the loss of a handkerchief? Although it is the first gift that he has for his beloved (3.3.433), and even before it becomes "proof "of his wife's infidelity (4.1.19-22), this little square of silk embroidered in strawberries assumes more importance than it deserves. At first, he tells Desdemona that his mother gave it to him. Later, he fills in some critical details that it has magical powers conferred on it by an Egyptian who guaranteed the faithful relationship of Othello's parents. He further "embroiders" the already decorated handkerchief by describing the magical means by which it was styled and empowered by being "dyed in mummy which the skillful / Conserved of maidens' hearts" (3.4.55-74). Its loss presupposes the loss of that marital tie, to be sure, yet the Moor has not shown himself to be particularly superstitious before; therefore, one cannot explain his wild reaction on the basis of superstition alone. Witness the passion of Othello's speech:

> Lie with her? Lie on her? We say lie on her when they
> belie her—Lie with her! Zounds, that's foulsome—

> handkerchief! To confess, and be hanged for his labor—
> first to be hanged, and then to confess! I tremble at it.
> Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing
> passion without some instruction. It is not words that
> shakes me thus—Pish! Noses, ears, and lips? Is't
> possible—Confess? Handkerchief? O devil! (4.1.36-45)

Shakespeare plumbs the depths of psychology in all of his tragedies, and *Othello* is no exception. This handkerchief was given him by his mother on her deathbed, presumably when he was seven or younger. We can assume, then, that he has been carefully carrying this handkerchief about with him for reasons other than as a talisman in battle because nowhere in the convoluted tale of the origins of it does Othello mention its power to confer physical safety. Moreover, the handkerchief was carried by a woman to guarantee the fidelity of a man, not by a woman to guarantee her own fidelity. What could have been his motive giving it to Desdemona to begin with? Let us examine a theory based on Othello's personal and historical background.

Although Othello is experienced in the ways of men, he knows only two kinds of women: maternal and erotic. Between those extremes there is no knowledge base because he has not had the advantage of a childhood spent in observing the relationships between husbands and wives in any culture. We may assume, however, that his mother, a devoted, Moorish spouse, complied with the custom of the veil. All women of virtue, virgins or married, wore veils (and still do in some countries) to hide their distracting desirability from easily enflamed passions because it was definitely their responsibility not to be attractive to men other than their husbands. In giving Desdemona this veil, Othello expects her to "assume the veil," a figure of speech applicable to chaste females in the Venetian world as well as in the Moorish milieu. Now that she no longer has that veil, she no longer has chastity. As Othello enters Desdemona's chamber to murder her, he says, "Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men" (5.2.6). She is a lovely, yet dangerous temptation that cannot be allowed to live. Observe the dichotomy in these lines:

> Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damned tonight; for she shall not
> live. No my heart is turned to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand.
> O the world hath not a sweeter creature! She might lie by an emperor's
> side and command him.
> (4.1.183-187)

They are almost immediately followed by these:

> Hang her! I do but say what she is. So delicate with her needle. An admirable musician. O she will sing the savageness out of a bear! Of so high and plenteous wit and invention. (4.1.189-192)

Still a few lines later, Othello rants:

> I will chop her into messes! Cuckold me! (4.1.202)

First she is breathtakingly lovely; then she is a source of evil. Here we find his heritage deeply etched in his heart, so deeply that his life's blood is spilled.

To uncover the metaphor one layer further, let us look at his childhood development. Surely a child separated from home and hearth at such a tender age may have warped sensibilities, but up until this time in the play, there is no reason to assume that this noble man is a murderous misogynist. He has married a beautiful and pure woman of high rank. She loves him and looks forward to being alone with him, as proven by her elopement. When they are threatened with the separation of war, she chooses to follow him. Emilia points out Desdemona's obvious sacrifices for Othello's love. "Hath she forsook so many noble matches, her father and her country, and her friends, to be called whore?" (4.2.124-126). Gently humorous references are made to their eagerness to be alone, and they are the perceived as the normally billing and cooing bride and groom. In fact, their love seems an inspiration to others (2.1.74-81). It is her obvious enjoyment of being physically close that supplies the ill-experienced Othello with his dreadful doubts and great guilt, yet neither she nor he are aware of the dangerous predicament of their joy. In Freudian terms, when Othello's mother died, he was at a crucial age in his psychosexual development, the Oedipal period when all children love the parent of the opposite sex and may even voice the desire to marry that parent when the child is a grownup. Othello was devoted to his mother; this maternal lady fair gave him that square of silk, and he has carried it in the purity of chivalry all this time. Off the battlefield, soldiers made use of the comforts of camp followers and, in this setting, we can assumed that the high class prostitutes of Venice, such as Cassio's Bianca, also gave Othello ease. He has no sisters, no family social life that can bring him into contact with suitably marriageable women until he meets the doomed Desdemona, and he marries her hastily. She is pure and gives him unconditional love, but he readily distrusts her when a disgruntled soldier assails him with disgusting insults about her. The normal reaction would be to hit the accuser, not the wife, but Othello immediately becomes disgusted and enraged with his perplexed wife and even loses face with his confreres by hitting her in public (4.1.240). What can be wanting in their marriage? Simply stated, he has married a woman as pure as his mother, and that is her fault. She enjoys their lovemaking, and that is even worse. The inheritor of his mother's veil of purity has allowed Othello to consummate an incestuous union. His disgust is as much with himself as it is with her. Someone who has been soldiering since age seven could have no meaningful contact with the real mother, the real woman, the real wife. The madonna he knows. The whore he knows. Whom he does not know is the lover he kills. There is a disturbing tone of necrophilia in these words spoken as Desdemona sleeps the sleep of the innocent:

> I know not where that Promethean heat that can thy light relume. When I have plucked the rose, I cannot give it vital growth again; it needs must wither. I'll smell thee on the tree. O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade Justice to break her sword. One more, one more! Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee and love thee after. One more, and that's the last! So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep, but they are cruel tears. This sorrow's heavenly; it strikes where it doth love. (5.2.12-22)

To complicate the metaphor, Othello and Desdemona are ignorant of each other's concept of the male and female roles in each other's culture. As a woman of some social standing, Desdemona has been trained to converse coyly with men to boost their egos. It is her manner and nothing more. Moorish women certainly would not behave so but would, in fact, deliberately seek seclusion. What a terrible sight, then, for Othello when he spies the handsome, younger Cassio, his very chosen lieutenant, in public tete-a-tete with Desdemona, Othello's not-so-blushing bride. Not only is this older man vulnerable to his wife's apparent preference for a youthful figure, but he interprets her touching palms with Cassio as signifying infidelity, the palm being an intimate zone in the Moslem culture. Iago recognizes this intimation and makes good use of it when he mutters to himself, "He takes her by the palm" (2.1.165). These unabashed "lovers" appear to be behaving shamelessly because they have no cause to feel any shame in their commonly held mores. Their apparent lack of discretion heats Othello's anger which Iago easily fans to flames of fury. We see this rage in Othello's speech to Desdemona in which he refers to her hand.

> This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart. Hot, hot and moist. This hand of yours requires a sequester from liberty; fasting and prayer; much castigation; exercise devout; for here's a young and sweating devil here that commonly rebels. Tis a good hand, a frank one. (3.4.38-44)

The memory of Brabantio's warning: "She has deceived her father, and may thee" (1.3.88) fans the flames even higher. By Othello's own words, we know that Desdemona was so romantically moved by his exciting battle stories that she gave him "a world of kisses" (1.3.158) and clearly invited him to propose marriage to her (1.3.165). She is, by his own admission, at least half responsible for their quick marriage. This is not the modest demeanor of a devoted Venetian daughter or of a virtuous Moslem bride. These are the actions of a flighty, infatuated female, and if Othello could so arouse her passion, other men could do as well. The double standard is alive and thriving in Othello's mind, yet he believes that he is doubly to blame for his weak wife's actions because he has seduced her with his exploits. No wonder he is so easily made suspicious; his motives are as murky to him as his skin.

There follows a period of time when Othello's ignorance boils over in frustration and his innocence seems to disappear. The playgoer loses sympathy for him and, in the same moment, wonders why Desdemona does not realize her danger and flee to the sanctuary that her uncle, Gratiano, could easily provide. Othello is, however, still a wanderer in an unmapped land because he makes no conscious choices and cannot be held accountable for his actions. He has the most imperfect conscience in all of literature in that he firmly believes that he is acting for the good when he destroys the alluring evil of a woman who, in his more biblically based origins would have been publicly stoned. Moreover, the equally morally confused Desdemona is certain that she is acting nobly when she confesses to suicide rather than admit to Othello's guilt. (In a modern sense, she assumes the guilt of an abusive spouse and excuses his actions because she somehow deserves them.)

The truth is blinding to Othello, and he puts out his light as a paraphrase of his blameless bride's death. As would an honorable Roman officer, he runs himself though with his own sword and increases the poignancy of his death by accepting it at the side of his beloved on their very bridal sheets, his sacrificial blood purifying them once more. As in the tales of the Christian martyrs, death has become the refuge from evil for the guileless lovers.

Deborah Seigman

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William Shakespeare as Cultural Critic
The Consequences of Denial of Full Citizenship of Outsiders as Presented in The Merchant of Venice

A short time ago I received a phone call and was asked if I would participate in a survey conducted by the Ross Perot Campaign Committee. I consented, and one of the questions asked was "What do you believe was the cause of the Los Angeles riots after the acquittal of the four policemen for the beating of Rodney King? A) Economic reasons or B) Racial reasons?" These were the only choices given, but having read William Shakespeare's play, *The Merchant of Venice*, and having now a increased level of consciousness, I wonder if a third choice should also have been offered—C) Society's treatment of outsiders. I believe that Shakespeare's work is a social commentary, cultural criticism, on the consequences of denial of full citizenship or acceptance of outsiders by a dominant culture.

The result of this denial is a slow, insidious accumulation of ill will, anger, distrust and hatred which, under certain conditions, somewhat like those in Los Angeles, might lead to an explosion of pent up emotions into acts of violence. These destructive actions, many times, boomerang, causing more harm to those who perpetuate the violence than to those at whom the violence is aimed. The loss of property in the Los Angeles riot ran into the millions of dollars, most of it to members of the black community.

Although Shakespeare set the play in a Venetian social environment, his insight holds true for Elizabethan England and true of any society of the past, present and future. His play demonstrates, microscopically, how members of a dominant society set up an environment of distrust and hatred that eventually causes an outsider to finally break, resort to violence, and destroy themselves.

The primary drive of human beings is self preservation, both biological and psychologically. Children who sometimes threaten to hold their breath until they die can only do so as long as they are conscious, but, once they lose consciousness, the brain will take over and carry on the normal biological functions to maintain life. Psychologically, Sigmund Freud speaks of defense mechanisms and behaviorists of coping skills, mental functions that people develop to avoid psychological pain caused by social interaction, especially if negative in nature.

Acceptance by other people of a community is a strong motivator, causing individuals to conform and to internalize the norms and mores of the culture in which they live. The institution of the family begins the process of socialization of children into the acceptable cultural values—a process which is continued throughout life by the institutions of government, religion, education, and economics and constantly reinforced by the approval of peers. Acceptance into a culture can be measured by the giving of honors, recognitions, social invitations and full citizenship with all the privileges and responsibilities thereof.

It is the combination of these two elements, defense mechanisms and social acceptance, which Shakespeare uses to construct a tragic tale of an individual, Shylock, who seems to have reached some level of acceptance into the dominant culture, but whose, attempts fail in the end. His failure is brought about by the attitudes and actions of members of the dominant culture. He allows himself to be so manipulated that he loses control of his emotions and thinking faculties. These losses lead him to commit irrational acts of violence, and he succeeds only in destroying himself.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock's attempts at acceptance take the form of a "sour grapes rationalization"—that the dominant culture, whose acceptance he wants, is not as good as his anyway. He interacts with members of the dominant culture in a detached and business like manner. He is accepted on the basis of being a shrewd business man, and if he is not well liked, he rationalizes, it is because he is much smarter than his competitors. Psychologically, this helps him avoid the pain of rejection. Any animosity toward him is because of his profession or his race, and not to him personally. He expresses this feeling at the time that Bassanio is negotiating a loan, and when Antonio appears to assure the loan he says in an aside:

He hates our sacred nation, and he rails
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls interest. (1.3.45-48)

The downfall of Shylock is brought about by his antagonist Antonio, the Venetian who epitomizes all that is good in a Christian merchant. He is a person of some economic success, having reached this position through honest, ethical entrepreneurial skills, as is pointed out in the opening conversation with Salerio, assuring him that his business dealings were not the reasons for his melancholy disposition:

. . . I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,

Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year.
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad. (1.1.41-45)

Even Shylock acknowledges his good character when at the time of the loan with Bassanio he states:

. . . he is a Christian
But more, for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis, and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice. (1.3. 39-42)

However Shakespeare also paints a darker side of Antonio, whose behavior is accepted as the norm by his associates. It is at the loan scene again that Shylock points out an ironic situation:

Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usance.
. . . .
You call me misbeliever, cutthroat dog,
And spet upon my Jewish gaberdine
. . . .
You that did void your rheum upon my beard
. . . And foot me as you spur a stranger cur
Over your threshold!
. . . .
You called me dog; and for these courtesies I'll lend you thus much
money? (1.3.103-126)

A powerful argument like this might elicit at least an apology, even if not meant, or at least a long pause of silence brought on by the shame of such behavior in the past, but Antonio's reply shows no such contrition of the heart as he replies: "I am as like to call thee so again, / To spet on thee again, to spurn thee too" (1.3.127-128). This venomous reply does not seem to trouble Bassanio. This attitude causes Shylock to seek some form of revenge by suggesting an amusing payment if the loan is forfeited. The payment is to be a pound of flesh. Even if the loan is repaid, he would have had some fun at their expense by having Antonio in a sweat as he awaited the return of his ships without mishap by the agreed time of repayment.

It is the loss of his daughter, Jessica, and his money, when she elopes with

Lorenzo, that causes Shylock to go into a form of shock. The coping mechanisms he had established for his protection and his family's have been undermined by his own daughter. The wealth he had accumulated as a prize of survival in a hostile environment has been stripped from him. His self esteem suffers a terrible blow. All the many years of verbal abuse, physical abuse and ostracism have been for nothing. He fights back to recover some part of what he was. It is the news of the misfortune of Antonio's ships and of the forfeiture of the loan that triggers in him the desire for revenge and the destruction of one of his antagonist.

Shylock is a person who has survived by knowing the ins and outs of Venetian society, especially its laws. He has learned to do the right things at the right time. He recognizes what are the limits of his culture and the limits of the dominant culture of Venice, and he has been careful to not cross the boundaries of either. But the invasion of his world by Lorenzo causes a collapse of his own defenses. He loses control of his emotions and thinking faculties, temporary insanity, so to speak, and in his pain he wants to hurt those who have hurt him. He demands justice from the court and he will have his pound of flesh. When asked by Salerio what he would do with his pound of flesh, he replies: "To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else / It will feed my revenge" (1.3.50-51). And later in a conversation with Tubal, a Jewish friend, on hearing more bad news about Antonio, he remarks: "I am glad of it. I'll plague him; I'll torture / him. I am glad of it" (109-110). It is at the trial where his overpowering desire for revenge causes some serious breakdown in his thinking. This lost of control leads to his destruction. A clear thinking person would probably have taken Bassanio's offer to double the original thousand ducats, but the vengeance-seeking Shylock replies:

> If every ducat in six thousand ducats
> Were in six parts, and every part a ducat
> I would not draw them. I would have my bond. (4.1.85-88)

. . . .

And to the Duke's plea for mercy, he responds:

> The pound of flesh which I demand of him
> Is dearly bought, is mine, and I will have it. (99-100)

When Portia enters the court disguised as a Doctor of Law and reviews the case and all that has transpired, she councils mercy and advises Shylock to take the money, but he continues to demand justice to the letter of the law. As he prepares to take his pound of flesh, the introduction of another Venetian law, which prohibits the shedding of Christian blood by an alien and provides for the confiscation of property anyone who threatens a Venetian citizen, begins his destruction First pleading ignorance of the law, he asks: "Is that the law?" (1.6.313) And quickly changes his mind and says; I take this offer then, "Pay the bond thrice / And let the Christian go" (1.6.317-318).

Shylock's quick change of mind and plead of ignorance of the law is an effort on his part to extricate himself from the corner he has painted himself into. He now asks to take only the principle and be allowed to leave. Too late and very quickly he realizes his predicament: having lost his daughter and money, all that he has left is about to be forfeited. Because of pain, anger, hatred, and his demand for revenge, he has placed himself in a dangerous position and total destruction is imminent. He is now at the mercy of the court and of those who moments before had been under his control and bidding.

The acts of mercy on the part of the court and particularly that of Antonio, leave Shylock a living corpse. Antonio states his terms of surrender or mercy:

Two things provided more: that for this favor

He presently become a Christian;

The other, that he do record a gift
Here in the court of all he dies possessed
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter. (4.1.385-389)

Completely crushed, robbed of his self esteem, stripped of his identity, his whole life's work gone, and his life style altered forever, Shylock begs:

I pray you give me leave to go from hence.
I am not well. Send the deed after me,
And I will sign it. (394-396)

One can just imagine the scene—a broken spirited man, shamed, scorned and with their laughter ringing in his ears, he goes away from their presences thinking, perhaps, thinking of the words of Gratiano:

Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself! (4.1. 363)

What did become of Shylock? It is not revealed in the play. His attempt at coexisting, as an outsider, with the dominant culture had failed. His undoing was coming out from behind his established defenses, giving vent to his anger and seeking revenge for wrongs perpetuated against him. Antonio was of course his main antagonist, but the silent approval by Bassanio and others of the Venetian society were contributing factors. Most societies have people like Antonio, good citizens admired for their achievements, pillars of the community, but within them lurks a malice toward individuals of minority groups. Most societies have individuals like Bassanio who by their silences, by not challenging those voices of hate, also contribute to the overall environment of suppression felt by members of minority groups. Most societies, probably, also have, as part of their statues, laws that favor one group over another. It is not just one incident, nor one person, nor group of persons, but the whole of a community, society or culture, that stands indicted and bears the responsibility for acts of suppression toward the outsiders.

These actions, piled one on top of the other over a long period of time, may become so oppressive that they generate a counter-hatred on the part of the oppressed. Finally, some action, situation or event might occur which causes an explosion of anger hatred, aimed at members of the dominant society. Ironically, the unleashed forces of violence, many times, are turned back onto the outsider and the destruction is to his.

All people need to take responsibility for their own behavior and pay for the consequences of their actions, but the way an individual may react under a certain set of conditions must be analyzed in the light of action-reaction. What are the circumstances or provocations that might lead to some peculiar reaction by an individual? Nothing really happens in a vacuum, especially in a community of people constantly interacting with each other. Although no one would like to take the responsibility or be held accountable for some one else's behavior, the fact is, people do respond to our actions, and in some measure, the Golden Rule holds true: what we do to others will be done to us.

Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice* speaks to us from the past. He points out a social condition of his time by using the medium of drama to raise the consciousness of the members of his society. We, in our time, have the same opportunity to view the play and contemplate what might be the consequences of denial of the rights of full citizenship or acceptance of outsiders by a dominant culture.

Vivian DeSoto

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Shylock: Outsider and Scapegoat

Renaissance literature reached its peak in the late 1500s and early 1600s, with one of the best known playwrights of this time being William Shakespeare, who, like the other playwrights of Renaissance England, was restricted when writing plays concerning politics and religion. To circumvent these restrictions and avoid angering the Queen, Shakespeare simply based many plays outside of England, as in Venice, and used an outsider to hold up to scrutiny any sensitive issues. Also, his plays appealed to the many different social classes on different intellectual levels. As a result, Shakespeare's plays are like an onion; as each layer is peeled away, new insights and issues are revealed.

One such play, The *Merchant of Venice*, presents a wide range of issues: anti-Semitism, greed, hypocrisy, justice, and mercy by using a Jew, the eternal outsider and scapegoat, as a focus and exotic Venice as the setting. Shylock's being an outsider is important because Shakespeare has liberty to examine and criticize sensitive issues and not worry about possible imprisonment. The audience may show pity or sympathy for Shylock, yet he is the natural "fall guy" and is doomed.

Historically, playwrights have used familiar plots and current concerns to make plays timely and profitable. Shakespeare was no different: this play has written in 1594, two years after the scandalous trial and subsequent execution of Dr. Lopez, Elizabeth I's court physician, who was accused of plotting to poison the Queen. During the trial, Lopez's Jewishness was emphasized by the prosecutor who made references to the doctor as "that vile Jew." *The Merchant of Venice* likewise makes numerous references to Shylock as "the devil," "dog," and "wolf." This strange combination of epithets adds up to the definition of "ogre," the mythical male symbol equivalent to "witch-mother" who murders or eats her children (Fiedler 109). One such obvious reference is, "Let me say, 'Amen' betimes, lest the Devil / cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew" (3.1.19-20). Some of the references are not as obvious such as " . . . For thy desires are wolvish, bloody, starved, and ravenous" (4.1.138), which ties in the story concerning Dr. Lopez. The name "Lopez" in Spanish means "wolf," a veiled anti-Semitic remark. In using the term "a stony adversary" to describe Shylock, the Duke has identified Shylock as inhuman because "adversary" means "Satan" in Hebrew. Witness his statement, "A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch / incapable of pity, void and empty from any dram of mercy" (4.1.6-7). The very name "Shylock" probably taken from "*shallach*," the Hebrew word meaning "cormorant," a greedy, fish-eating bird, exhibits greater anti-Semitic bias (Boyce 595). Shakespeare's plays appealed to many different social classes on different levels; so these remarks were probably obvious to the more educated population of the audience. Rarely addressing Shylock by name, the other characters usually used the reference "the Jew." In the court scene Antonio is referred to by name, but the Duke says, "Go one, and call the Jew into the court" (4.1.13). Portia also uses the reference, "Then must the Jew be merciful" (4.1.182). Being the outsider, Shylock is not accorded the same respect given to the Christian characters because he has no "Christian name."

The hypocrisy of Christian views is also examined as Shylock brings to our attention the fact that these charitable Christians condone the practice of slavery. He points out that if they were true Christians their slaves would be freed, but, because slaves are viewed as property, they are not accorded the same rights as citizens; the discussion is closed by the statement, "They are our slaves"(4.1.98). Shylock also points out that Christians have treated him unfairly. "You call me misbeliever, cutthroat dog / and spit upon my Jewish gaberdine, and all for use of that which is mine own" (1.3.112-113). Christianity teaches that one should treat everyone as a brother. Not only has the Christian ethic of "love thy neighbor" been forgotten, but Shylock is further humiliated by being spat upon, a repugnant act. (Twentieth-century readers find this particularly upsetting because it evokes memories of the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany.) In contrast Shylock states, "I hate him for he is a Christian . . . " (1.3.43), when giving his reason for disliking Antonio. He also hates his lending money at a lower rate, thus depressing the going rate and reducing Shylock's profits. Another reference to Shylock's intolerance of Christians, " . . . I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you" (1.3.38), illustrates that he is not following the teachings of Judaism which stress the ethical treatment of all men. Even though Antonio's treatment of Shylock was reprehensible, the outsider Shylock is shown as petty; this device shifts the audience's attention from Antonio's behavior. Both the Christian and Jewish characters' behaviors are based on mistrust and prejudice. It has often been observed that people hate in others what they see in themselves.

During the Renaissance, usury was seen as one harmful effect of the new commercialism that was replacing the old custom of land ownership as the basis of wealth. The middle class merchant's newly acquired wealth was allowed him to nudge the nobleman out of his position of prominence. Moreover, with wealth came power if one was a citizen. The old order feared this change because, in many cases, it meant a reduction or complete loss of power. Shakespeare examined this fear by pitting Shylock, a Jewish usurer with a lucrative mercantile future, against Antonio, the merchant clinging to the feudal injunction: "I n[illegible]er lend nor borrow" (1.3.62). Usury was practiced by both Jews and Christians in Renaissance England, but in Venice, the location of the play, Jews were primarily the usurers. The Christian usurers charged the customary ten percent interest on loans as dictated by the Catholic church. The Jewish usurers in England, however, were not restricted by Christian doctrine and were known to charge up to eighty-nine percent on their loans (Hall 163). Only Jews were identified as usurers, although such Christian men as the Medicis and the Duke of Norwich also grew rich in the same manner. The avarice which all men possess is portrayed in Shylock's greed and in his hatred of Antonio, who lends money without interest. The usurer enabled the merchant to purchase many goods in overseas markets, in order to make huge profits. This pursuit of more profits was shared by all businessmen, who were ashamed to admit this fact because it went against the Christian teaching. It was easier to blame and hate the Jew for providing the necessary capital. Shylock's greed is best presented in the line, "My daughter! Oh, my ducats! Oh, my daughter! / Fled with a Christian! Oh, my Christian ducats!" (2.4.16-17). His character behaves as the English expect by showing that he loves his money more than his daughter. Antonio, on the other hand, is shown in a more favorable light because he is willing to risk his fortune by lending it to Bassanio, thereby enabling him to curry Portia's favor and marry her as shown in:

> Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea,
> Neither have I money nor commodity
> To raise a present sum. Therefore go forth,
> Try what my credit can in Venice do.
> That shall be racked, even to the uttermost,
> To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
> (1.2.176-182)

On the one level, these examples appear only to examine the actions of a greedy Jew, but on another level they emphasize further that man also makes excuses for what he least likes about his actions.

Ultimately, justice is placed in opposition to mercy. Shylock's character follows the interpretation of the Old Testament which emphasizes strict obedience as humanity's obligation. He believes that he is in the right according to the letter of the law. The Duke tries to remind Shylock to show mercy so that later in heaven he may be given the same treatment, and Shylock replies, "What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?" (4.1.89). He believes he is in the right and does not fear God's judgment. According to Shylock, he has every right to demand a pound of flesh from Antonio because of failure to repay his debt. In contrast, Portia follows the interpretation of the New Testament which stresses God's mercy, "The quality of mercy is not strained . . . " (4.1.184). Portia states that mercy comes from Christianity which is just another reason why Shylock must fail. His adherence to the strict letter of the law is used against him because he may only have flesh with no blood. Throughout the court scene, Portia asks Shylock to show mercy or at least to take a larger sum of money to repay the loan. These pleas are, however, all part of her plan for vengeance. When Shylock realizes that the strict interpretation of the law would only mean his failure, he attempts to back out of the forfeiture and take the money, "Give me my principal and let me go" (4.1.322). Once again, Portia uses the strict interpretation against him because he may only cut one pound or risk his life, as shown in:

> Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less
> nor more but just a pound of flesh.
> If thou cut'st more or less than a just
> pound, be it but so much as makes it
> light or heavy in the substance, or
> the division of the twentieth part of
> one poor scruple—nay, if the scale
> to turn but in the estimation of a hair—
> thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate. (4.1.325-332)

Again, the outsider cannot win even when in the right. Shylock's being an outsider gives Portia an opportunity to use Venetian law against him. This law punishes outsiders who try to harm citizens through either direct or indirect means, and the law likewise confiscates the outsider's property and goods as illustrated in:

> Tarry Jew.
> The law hath yet another hold on you.
> It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
> If it be proved against an alien
> That by direct or indirect attempts
> He seek the life of any citizen,

The party' gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods. The other
half comes to the privy coffer of the state.
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
of the Duke only, against all other voice. (4.1.346-356)

These merciful Christians are not through with Shylock because an added punishment is having to convert to Christianity. This act is the worst of all because it assumes that the death of Shylock's Judaism and his being reborn a Christian are fair penalties, for it allows him to retain half of fortune as witnessed in:

So please my lord the Duke and all the court,
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,
I am content, so he will let me have
The other half in use, to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter,
Two things provided more, that, for this favor,
he presently become a Christian. (4.3.380-387)

If Shakespeare were writing today, what prejudices would he attack? What stereotypes would he undermine? The modern-day Shakespeare would only have to search as far as his newspaper or television for subject matter in which to point out man's foibles and chronicle them in plays. Numerous examples of prejudices such as anti-Semitism in unified Germany, apartheid in South Africa, hatred between the Israelis and Palestinians, and racial tensions in the United States, are but a few. Stereotypes abound: "all blacks have rhythm," "blondes are dumb," and "Jews are stingy." Mankind enjoys the belief that we have progressed from a primitive state and are well on the road to the ideal. If this modern Shakespeare did exist, high school students could then compare the two and quickly conclude that society really has not changed much in the last four hundred years.

Elizabeth Cook

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He Who Will "give and hazard all he hath"

In Plato's fully civilized state or in a "just" state, the rulers have the responsibility and obligation to keep the interest of the community as a whole in mind and to instruct the citizens in the tenets of ethical citizenship. Rulers should act as models and examples and seek to motivate the citizens to act in a virtuous and honorable manner. Certainly the "outsider," by definition, does not have the rights and privileges of a citizen, and the treatment of these outsiders by rulers and citizens has varied throughout history. In Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, the Duke of Venice permits the citizens to treat Shylock (an extreme outsider) in an abhorrent manner, but, in contrast, the ruler of Belmont (Portia's father) attempts to educate citizens and to judge outsiders fairly, even from the grave.

In order to fully understand the behavior of the Venetian aristocracy towards Shylock, one must first understand the accepted limits placed on Jews in Venetian history and also the attitudes of the Christian citizens with regard to usury. In Pullan's *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550-1670*, the Christian social structure of Venice is clearly defined as consisting "of noblemen, of citizens and merchants, of artisans or guildsmen, and of clergy" (146). Jews in Venice were considered as outcasts and in a class lower than any of the Christian categories. In the trading republic,

> economic planners were prepared to allot determinate and circumscribed roles to foreigners and newcomers who could complement, rather than compete with, the activities of the long-established Venetian nobility and citizenry. (146)

Therefore, very specific duties, obligations, limitations, and privileges were assigned by the Senate to the members of the Jewish community. With a few rare exceptions, Jews were not allowed to produce anything for fear of creating competition for the establishment. This was so pervasive that "even Passover matzos were supplied to Jews by Christian bakers" (147). Jews were allowed to serve as pawnbrokers, as dealers in second-hand goods, as traders, and as moneylenders. Frederic C. Lane, in his book, *Venice and History*, describes how during the thirteenth century, laws were passed against usury but a "businessman's standard" (64) emerged in the fourteenth century to accommodate economic needs. Historically, at the time of play, money lending in Venice, as in England, was not totally noxious, but acceptable under certain circumstances. Although usury was condemned by "Aristotle's theory that money cannot breed money" (Myrick xxvi) and by Christian churchmen, money could be legitimately placed at interest at a bank and "a contract was considered usurious only if the borrower was charged an unusually high rate or taken advantage of in some way, such as being made to give unusual security" (Lane 64). The Elizabethan audience may not have had an immediate distaste for Shylock as a Jew due to their lack of firsthand knowledge of Jews, but Elizabethans had a definite dislike for usurers because they were infamous for demanding high interest rates through the use of unethical contracts.

From the very first act of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, the audience is aware that Shylock has been routinely abused and disgraced by Antonio. Shylock says to Antonio, "You call me misbeliever, cutthroat dog, / And spet upon my Jewish gaberdine, / And all for the use of that which is mine own" (1.3.108-110). Even though this behavior by an aristocratic leader of the community seems unbelievable, Antonio reinforces his negative conduct when he replies, "I am as like to call thee again, / To spet on thee again, to spurn thee too" (1.3.127-128). This is the same Antonio about whom Salerio says, "A kinder gentleman treads not the earth" (1.8.35). Evidently this horrid behavior towards Shylock was condoned by Venetian society simply because Shylock was a Jew and a moneylender. Aside from the extreme contract made with Antonio, the audience is not aware of any previous over-zealous or cruel loan contracts. Shylock appears to have been successful in his dealings, but did he deserve Antonio's despicable outrages? Shylock's employment opportunities were limited by his Jewish heritage, and moneylenders played a useful role in the economy by paying specific taxes and buying goods produced by Venetian citizens. One has to wonder why Shylock was subjected to this harsh treatment and why an admirable, cosmopolitan state allowed such behavior. Clearly, the ruling class, as evidenced by Antonio, did not exhibit ethical behavior towards Jewish moneylenders.

As the play progresses, Shylock becomes fanatical about getting his revenge, and his hostility is fueled by Jessica's running away with a Christian and robbing Shylock of his dear ducats and the precious ring given to him by his wife. At this point, Christians have wronged him, and he finally sees a chance where he can legally win. Shylock says to Antonio,

> Thou call'dst me a dog before thou hadst a cause,
> But since I am a dog, beware my fangs.
> The Duke shall grant me justice. (3.3.6-8)

Thereby, we become aware that Shylock has faith in the Duke's judgment and thinks he will finally be compensated. Even Antonio is convinced that the Duke must follow the letter of the law for the good of Venice as a trading city. Because Venice is connected to all nations through trade, to deny the letter of the law "will much impeach the justice of the state" (3.3.29), and Antonio is ready to sacrifice his pound of flesh.

In the courtroom while speaking to Antonio, the Duke refers to Shylock as "a stony adversary, an inhuman wretch, / Uncapable of pity, void and empty / of any dram of mercy" (4.1.4-6). Just moments later, he pleads with Shylock to spare Antonio and concludes with, "We all expect a gentle answer, Jew" (4.1.34). These statements seem a bit contradictory. Does the Duke truly believe that the Jew can be kind and "gentle/gentile"? As a ruler, does he exhibit behavior that would motivate citizens and non citizens to be honest with one another? The audience knows that the last thing the Duke expects is a gentle answer. Also, Shakespeare's play on the words "gentle" and "gentile" only makes the remark more insincere and hypocritical. Later when Shylock has refused to show any mercy, the Duke replies with, "How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring none?" (4.1.88). The irony in that statement is obvious. Did any of the aristocracy ever show any mercy towards Shylock? Can't the Duke see that no one has been instructed or shown how to show mercy when a conflict between insiders and outsiders occurs? This "show no mercy" policy becomes even more apparent as the court case concludes.

Next, Portia arrives and gives her beautifully constructed "mercy" speech (4.1.183-204). She explains that both the one that gives mercy as well as the one that receives it are blessed, and that mercy can be found in the hearts of kings, and that one is godly if he can season justice with mercy. When Shylock again refuses to alter his demand, in frustration Bassanio asks Portia "To do a great right, do a little wrong, / And curb this cruel devil of his will" (4.1.215-216). Portia refuses because, "There is no power in Venice / Can alter a decree established" (4.1.217-218). Portia knows that she cannot manipulate the law and get away with it, so she appeals to Shylock's sense of greed by tempting him with three times the money owed. Shylock answers very graciously that he is only interested in acting on his bond. Then Portia plays her trump card and does manage a manipulation of the interpretation of the bond and corners Shylock in his own "letter of the law" game. At this point, Shylock agrees to take the money and to release Antonio. Bassanio offers the money, but Portia steps in and says, "The Jew shall have all justice. Soft, no haste; / He shall nothing but the penalty" (4.1.320-321). The entire conflict could have ended here, but Portia is not willing to show the same mercy she spoke so highly of earlier. She continues to make Shylock's situation even more hideous by turning the law completely against Shylock and his alien status. She tells him his "life lies in the mercy of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice" (4.1.354-355) and his worldly goods will be divided between the state and Antonio. Granted, the Duke finally does show him mercy by pardoning him and reducing the money owed the state to a fine. Antonio, likewise, shows mercy and allows Shylock the use of his own money until Shylock's death, but then it must go to Lorenzo and Jessica. Antonio only has one other demand in exchange for this show of mercy: that Shylock "become a Christian" (4.1.386). Shylock's whole identity is based on being Jewish and this final decree takes away the very essence of his being and is the most punishing of all. All of these "gentle" grants to Shylock were done in the name of mercy and justice.

The Duke allows and participates in the unethical and downright cruel treatment of Shylock. If Antonio had not been allowed to act so badly towards Shylock, then surely Shylock would never have created such a horrendous contract nor would he have been so vehement and vengeful when it came due. If the Duke, as ultimate ruler, and the aristocracy had acted in an ethical, honorable, and virtuous manner towards the outsider, perhaps the community could have been harmonious and the state as a whole a congenial place to live.

As a contrast to the unfair and unjust realities of Venice, Belmont evokes an image of an ideal society where all is pleasant. Portia's father, one who "was ever virtuous" (1.2.27), left specific instructions to insure that his daughter would marry someone who is able to see beyond the surface and is willing to give and risk all for the one he loves. He leaves the chance for Portia's hand to anyone who can choose wisely and does not limit the chance to insiders only. Suitors come from distant lands and have the same opportunity to choose the correct casket as those from neighboring cities. The gold and silver caskets, as well as their inscriptions, are meant to tempt the suitors who are easily swayed by external appearances and egotistical desires. The clue to the gold casket reads, "Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire" and the silver one reads, "Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves." The lead casket which bears the inscription "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath," (2.7.4-7) is clearly the most honorable and selfless choice. Those who selected the gold and silver caskets must leave immediately and must never marry—which is fitting for those who are selfish and ungiving. Through his will, Portia's father attempted to teach lessons in virtuous behavior as well as to exhibit impartiality towards all suitors, whether foreigners, outsiders, or neighbors.

However, one must remember the unreal quality surrounding Belmont, a city where ambiguities abound. The appearance versus reality question arises with every scene set there. Portia's father seems to be seeking a virtuous husband for Portia, but in reality he constructs a game of chance. Bassanio appears to be concerned about making an honorable choice, while Portia cheats by giving him clues to the correct casket. His very dress and entourage prove to the audience that he considers his outward appearance to be the most important aspect in the wooing of Portia. In fact, Bassanio's concern for creating an impressive appearance leads to the problematic loan from Shylock, and yet, Bassanio chooses the lead casket. These inconsistencies add to both the fanciful aura of Belmont and the irony of the play as a whole. Certainly, Bassanio's true character and Portia's father's true intentions become suspect.

The rulers in *The Merchant of Venice* influence the ideals and behavior of the citizens. Through their actions, ethical or otherwise, Portia's father and the Duke exemplify the acceptable standards for their communities. The citizens of Venice are not held accountable for their unethical behavior towards outsiders, and actually learn nothing about the true meaning of justice and mercy, while those in Belmont are at least provided a superficial model by which to fairly judge their fellow man. In reading and examining this aspect of ethical leadership and how it translates into ethical citizenship, one cannot help but consider the importance of choosing the very best of political leaders as well as those for the many other leadership positions within the community. On a more relevant level, we, as teachers, role models, and examples must accept the responsibility and obligation to try to instruct our students in just and merciful behavior towards insiders and outsiders alike.

Susan Hanson

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What I Learned from Machiavelli

Yesterday, in our simulated seminar, Paula Moeller asked the question she devised concerning Machiavelli's *The Prince*. The first part of her question concerned Machiavelli's ideas about the virtue of the ruler and the appearance of virtue that the ruler must seem to have. We discussed the notion that the ruler must learn how not to be virtuous. This made me think of Othello. Before the seminar, the class had been discussing *Othello* with Dr. Ronan and the two ideas made a connection in my mind. I thought of Othello's tragic flaw and it occurred to me that it was innocence. If Othello had had more experience in worldly matters, other than his military life, he probably would not have fallen so easily into the manipulations of Iago. At the beginning of the play there are the lines:

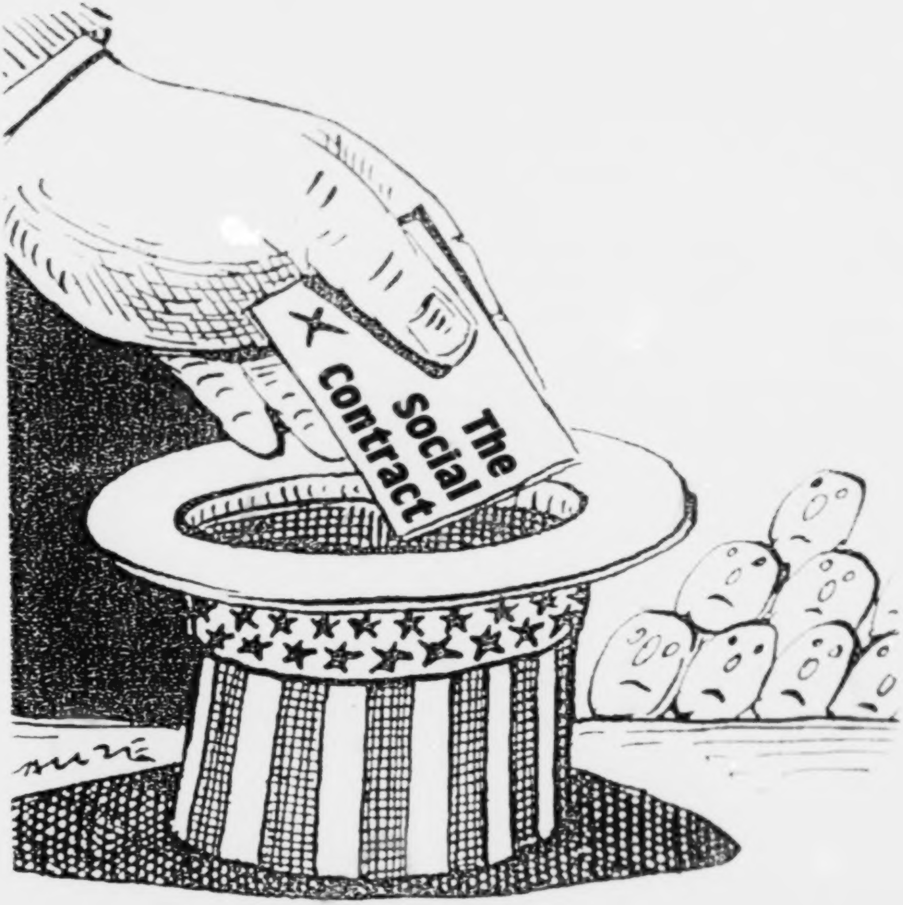
Till now some nine moons, they have used
Their dearest action, in the tented field;
And little of the great world can I speak
More than pertains to feats of broils and battles. (1.3.84-87)

Because Othello was perhaps too naive and virtuous, he could not really recognize evil when it appeared as Iago. Jealousy, which has often been cited as Othello's tragic flaw, I see as a consequence of his innocence. Machiavelli's writing let me see Othello in this light.

Today I again saw Machiavelli in today's headlines in the *Dallas Morning News* (Friday, July 24). The headline read, "QUAYLE COMMENT DRAWS FIRE." I thought to myself, "What has Quayle said now?" It turned out that Quayle's comments on the *Larry King Live* show that Wednesday were the focus of the current storm. Quayle was asked what he would do if his thirteen-years-old daughter was, as an adult, to be pregnant out of wedlock and wish to have an abortion. He said he would support his daughter in whatever decision she made. It is well known what the Bush-Quayle public stance is on the abortion issue. We know Quayle supports the Republican Party's proposal of a constitutional amendment banning most abortions. Did Machiavelli know human nature? Machiavelli could see that there was a division in thinking between public stance and private viewpoints. He realized that people in power could and should hold a view of things that were for the public good, while holding different views for individual action. Quayle stumbled right into Machiavelli and didn't recognize him.

Gary Hart didn't know Machiavelli existed, otherwise, he would have known it is better to keep up the appearance of virtue, but keep what you do in private life out of public view. John F. Kennedy surely read Machiavelli, or so it seems. He kept his numerous liaisons out of public view as much as possible. All I know is that if I ever run for public office, I'm going to reread *The Prince*.

Cynthia Walling


The Social Contract

Obligations of the Individual Inside and Outside the Social Contract

I wished myself a beast, a bird, anything rather than a slave.
Frederick Douglass

. . . the prosperity of the race depends much more on liberty than peace.
Jean Jacques Rousseau

Obligations between the government and the citizen are often unclear in our nation. The problem we face is defining these obligations. Jean Jacques Rousseau and Frederick Douglass help us to define them. Specifically, they help to define what obligations slaves have to the state in early American history, and what duties citizens have who are members of an oppressive society. They argue that a slave is not a member of the social contract and therefore not obligated to it. They assert that members of society are obligated to correct oppression in that society, though they disagree about the actions they can take. Finally, each implies that when society reaches consensus through dialogue, oppression can be limited. Together, these two profound thinkers define what obligations exist when a government oppresses the people it is contracted to protect.

The peculiar institution of slavery is one of the most obvious cases of oppression in American history. Were the slaves of ante-bellum South included in the social contract, and if not, did they have any obligations to white society? Rousseau asserts in *The Social Contract* that a social contract is created when people decide to bind together to increase their comfort and safety. The general will is the will of the people to join together into this compact to achieve security. Once citizens enter the social contract, they submit to the general will and are obligated to follow it. If they do not follow the general will, they must suffer the consequences that the contract applies to their actions.

Rousseau, however, observes that slaves are not a part of the social contract, because it would be "nonsensical to say: I make a covenant with you entirely at your expense, and for my benefit" (Rousseau 13). Although he speaks about slavery in general rather than specifically about the peculiar institution in America, he condemns slavery. Once a government is established, all "are equalized by convention and legal right," but there can be no equality in a slave system" (22). No one should be in the position to "be able to purchase another, and none so poor, as to be forced to sell himself" (47). "The terms 'slavery' and 'right' contradict and exclude each other"(13). Certainly a good government is one that provides rights for its citizens. Rousseau points out that liberty is the essence of the general will, and since slaves are robbed of their liberty, they cannot be included in the general will. They are, in fact, excluded from the social contract, since "they cease to exist" once they are enslaved (87).

Whether intentionally or unintentionally, Frederick Douglass draws upon the themes of Rousseau's social contract. As a slave, Douglass found himself having to come to terms with his obligations under the institution of slavery. He asks himself, "may not my condition after all be God's work and ordered for a wise purpose, and if so, was not submission my duty?" (Douglass 203) He concludes that it is not his duty to submit, because liberty is the "inestimable birthright of every man," and converts "every object into an asserter of this right" (86). This statement complements Rousseau's belief that liberty should be provided in the social contract, and reflects Douglass' belief that as a slave, he is not a member of white society.

Rousseau argues further that private interest, without reference to the general will, is contrary to the general will. He argues that "when the sacred name of public good is made use of to cover the basest interest, then the general will is silenced" (93). Slavery can certainly be considered a base, private interest of the slave holder. The slave holders earn their bread from the sweat and toil of the slaves, and the slaves are deprived of their liberty. A frequent justification that slave holders used was that slavery was in the best interest of the state; in fact, it merely lined the private pockets of the slave holder. Since slavery is a base, private interest, it cannot be a part of the general will. Therefore, slavery silences the general will.

Hence, both Douglass' and Rousseau's arguments show that slaves are not a part of the social contract which oppresses them. The next question that must be addressed is: are slaves obligated to follow the general will in this social contract? Both Douglass and Rousseau imply that slaves are not obligated to such a contract. Douglass believed that the majority of people were blind to the immoral nature of slavery, and that it was his obligation to fend for himself. This is evident when he decides to protect himself from the physical abuse of his master and when he runs away. Moreover, said Douglass, "to make a man a slave is to rob him of his moral responsibility" within the context of the social compact which excludes him. Douglass eloquently explains this principle in his justification of stealing from his master and white society:

> I am, I thought, not only the slave of Master Thomas, but I am the slave of society at large. Society at large has bound itself, in form and in fact, to assist Master Thomas in robbing me of my labor; therefore, whatever rights I have against Master Thomas I have equally against those confederated with him in robbing me of liberty. As society has marked me out as privileged plunder, on the principle of self-preservation, I am justified in plundering in turn. (105)

Rousseau also states the inseparability of liberty and responsibility explicitly:

> To renounce our liberty is to renounce our quality of man, and with it all the rights and duties of humanity. No adequate compensation can possibly be made for a sacrifice so complete. Such a renunciation is incompatible with the nature of man; whose actions, when once he is deprived of free will, must be destitute of all morality. Finally, a convention which stipulates absolute authority on one side, and unlimited obedience on the other, must be considered vain and contradictory. Is it not clear that there can be no obligation to a person from whom everything may be justly required? And does not the single circumstance of there being no equivalence and no exchange also annul the act? (10)

According to the arguments of Douglass and Rousseau, then, a slave is not obligated to the social contract, since the slave is deprived of liberty and excluded from the contract.

The character Sethe, in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, is an individual who is excluded from the social contract and therefore free from the laws it espouses. Sethe's action of taking Beloved's life cannot be judged in the context of the social contract; for, as Douglass argues, a slave has no moral responsibility to the society that excludes slaves from its contract; and, as Rousseau argues the individual excluded from the compact has no obligation to follow the general will.

Rousseau writes that families are "the only natural societies" when a social contract does not exist (6). Sethe's actions are consistent with this principle, for she reasons that to take her children's lives will protect them. Life as a slave under the rule of Schoolteacher is worse than death. In her mind, she owes no allegiance to her master or to white society, since they have excluded her from their contract. Though she acts out of fear when she takes her child's life, Sethe reasons that there is no alternative. Slavery is worse than death, and she must make an immediate, yet controlled decision as to which she will choose. She chooses death. Sethe's belief that it is better for her children to be dead than to be slaves is evident in her dialogue with Paul D:

> "It didn't work, did it?
>
> "Did it work?" he asked.
>
> "It worked," she said.
>
> "How? Your boys are gone you don't know where. One girl dead, the other won't leave the yard. How did it work?"
>
> "They ain't at Sweet Home. Schoolteacher ain't got em."
>
> "Maybe there's worse."
>
> "It ain't my job to know what's worse. It's my job to know what is and to keep them away from what I know is terrible. I did that." (165)

Though the sheriff prevents her from taking all of her children's lives, Sethe succeeds in altering the destiny of her family from one of slavery to one of freedom. She also fulfills her natural responsibilities to the natural society that does include her—her family. She succeeds in protecting her family, for as Douglass says, she wants herself and her children to be "anything rather than a slave"—even dead (86).

Rousseau provides another principle which is consistent with Sethe's action. In the absence of a social contract, "the first law is that of self-preservation," and one's "first cares are those which he owes to himself" (6). Douglass concurs with such logic, as mentioned previously, when he says he steals for "self preservation". In the act of killing her children, Sethe also believes she is acting on behalf of her own self-preservation in addition to her children's. She sees her children as an extension of herself, calling them "all the parts of her that were precious and fine and beautiful" (163). Since society has excluded her and deprived her of liberty, she must act to preserve herself and her family. She believes taking her children's lives is the only option that will achieve that end.

One feels sympathy for Sethe's children, and the imagery of the scene is disturbing. Her action can be interpreted as violating her obligation to her family. It can be seen as violating universal laws and natural laws. Sethe, though, might argue that such laws cry out against suffering and slavery, and that killing her children is a lesser evil than letting them suffer. However, neither Rousseau nor Douglass conveys an argument on behalf of such universal laws. And we cannot judge Sethe in the context of the social contract, since her exclusion from it does not bind her to it.

Having concluded that the slave is not a part of the social contract and therefore not obligated to follow the laws espoused in the social contract, we can analyze the obligations that citizens have when they are a member of the social contract. Rousseau and Douglass believe there is an obligation on the part of individuals to stop oppression. Rousseau provides an important mechanism for explaining how a minority can escape the oppression of the majority when he differentiates between the "general will" and the "will of all". He explains the idea that the general will is not always evident to the majority when he states: "The general will is always right, but the judgement that guides it is not always enlightened" (35). Furthermore, he states:

> [it is] necessary to make the people see things as they are, and sometimes as they ought to appear, to point out to them the right path which they are seeking, to guard them from the seducing voice of private wills, and, helping them to see how times and places are connected, to induce them to balance the attraction of immediate and sensible advantage against the apprehension of unknown and distant evil. (35)

This statement clearly demonstrates his belief that the minority has a duty to persuade and change "the will of all" when it deprives people of their liberty. The institution of slavery provides an example of this principle. The majority of Americans believed slavery was a necessary institution, but the minority eventually convinced society that it was immoral and not in the general will. Rousseau believed it to be the duty of these enlightened citizens to abolish slavery.

The freedman Frederick Douglass agreed with Rousseau that he has an obligation to convince society of the horrors of slavery. He profoundly believed in his duty to fully employ his capabilities to end slavery. He constantly spoke out against slavery, helped runaway slaves, and spent his life trying to gain citizenship for all.

Though both agree that citizens have an obligation to correct the "will of all" when it is wrong, Rousseau and Douglass disagree about the actions one can take to achieve this end. Rousseau speaks of small nation-states where persuasion should come about through communitarian dialogue that works toward consensus. Violence, illegal acts, and civil disobedience are not acceptable because they merely oppose the general will rather than enlighten people to it.

Douglass, on the other hand, believes illegal acts are an acceptable form of persuasion. He breaks the law when he helps runaway slaves, and runs from the law himself after the John Brown incident. He believes the majority can sometimes be mistaken in the laws to which it adheres, whereas Rousseau believes that communitarian dialogue will correct the majority before laws are adopted.

However, the society in which Douglass lived was different from the ideal Democracy which Rousseau advocates. America in the nineteenth Century did not have communitarian dialogue that achieved consensus. This failure occurred in part because many people in the large American democracy were not included in the dialogue. On this issue of inclusion in dialogue, both Rousseau and Douglass agree.

Rousseau advocates dialogue that reaches consensus. Since consensus implies unanimity, one can infer that Rousseau advocates inclusion of all members of the social contract in communitarian dialogue. American Democracy, though, does not achieve such inclusion of its citizenry in dialogue.

Douglass reflects this sentiment of inclusion, stating, "if intelligence is the only true and rational basis of government, it follows that that is the best government which draws life and power from the largest sources of wisdom, energy, and goodness at its command" (473). Drawing on the powers of everyone implies inclusion in dialogue of all contracted citizens. In this sense, all members of the social contract must be included in dialogue to prevent oppression from occurring.

In Mark Twain's novel, *Huckleberry Finn*, Huck and Jim are two characters from different cultures and perspectives who rely on each other's strengths to successfully make their way down the river. Perhaps we as a society are analagous to Huck and Jim. We have a diverse society composed of different cultures and perspectives, and we must rely on each other's strengths to successfully achieve liberty for our citizenry. In order to succeed, we must have more dialogue and more extensive inclusion of the wisdom of our citizenry. Greater consensus and less oppression may result. Rousseau remarks, "a little agitation gives new vigour to men's minds, and the prosperity of the race depends much more on liberty than peace" (76). Let it be the priority of this nation to tolerate the agitation which is caused when all different perspectives are included in dialogue, and let it be the priority of our citizens to voice their opinions in dialogue. Only when we have such inclusion and tolerance will we achieve liberty, and only liberty will allow the people in our social contract to float down the river toward success, rather than struggle up river against oppression.

Karl Kevin Brown

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Slavery's Influence on the American Definition of Citizenship

Definitions of citizenship adapt themselves to the political systems which generate them. Thus citizenship may be defined one way under a totalitarian dictatorship but be defined differently in a democracy. The human experiences that occur as a political system develops influence that system's definition of a citizen and citizenship. The American definition of a citizen and citizenship has been profoundly influenced by the institution of slavery and the Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* illustrates this rare and remarkable contribution beautifully.

Americans, of course, did not invent slavery. "Slavery was basic to Greek civilization..." (Andrewes 133), as it was to most early civilizations. A source of free or cheap labor was necessary to provide the leisure time needed to produce the early contributions of the first civilizations we admire even today. Antony Andrewes supports this economic justification for slavery in his book *The Greeks*. He explains that slaves in ancient Athens were acquired through kidnapping, barter, and as war captives. "The main supply came from the outer world through slavedealers . . ." (134-135). American slaves were acquired in much the same way, through slave hunters who kidnapped Africans and local African slavedealers who raided their neighboring tribes and sold their war captives. Not much changed in the method of acquiring slaves but much changed in their treatment. The American slave institution was the first racially based slave institution (Mixon 27 July).

Slavery defined the social position of everyone (Mixon 27 July). Society in the ancient world was divided between citizens and non-citizens. Citizenship entailed many rights and privileges which a slave, as a non-citizen, was not able to enjoy. In ancient Athens small land owners commonly owned slaves and worked side by side with them in the fields. The American experience was quite different. Most slaves in the American south were owned by only the largest land holders, a very small minority of the white population (Andrewes 135). Slavery was a means of gaining wealth in America, not just evidence of position as in earlier civilizations (Mixon small group 27 July).

In some early civilizations, slaves were allowed to own property, marry legally and buy their own freedom (Andrewes 139-141). Yet slaves were still objects to be bought and sold without complete protection of their rights by the laws of the city-state. Andrewes points out the "the suggestion is clear that the life of even a skilled slave was one which he was ready to fly from on a very uncertain prospect"(139). If slaves in the ancient world, with the "rights" they enjoyed, were willing to risk everything for freedom, the institution of slavery must have had a tremendous flaw. This weakness is only exaggerated in the American system where abuse and neglect were much more common.

Plato, in his book *The Republic*, puts forth the idea that when it is difficult to define something, one should determine what it is not and then what it is will become clear. Toni Morrison helps us understand the flaws and weaknesses of slavery by providing a rare reaction to the "peculiar institution." This allows us to see the rights denied to American slaves, thus clarifying what rights are necessary to be classified a free citizen in America. Morrison answers the pro-slavery argument of sectionalism which stated that Southerners treated their slaves more humanely than the wage slavery inflicted on "free" blacks in the north (Mixon 27 July). Slave holders protected and cared for their slaves. Baby Suggs comments on this very issue with her final owners, the Garners. She states,

> It's better here, but I'm not. The Garners, it seemed to her, ran a special kind of slavery, treating them like paid labor, listening to what they said, teaching what they wanted known. And he didn't stud his boys. Never brought them to her cabin with directions to "lay down with her," like they did in Carolina, or rented their sex out on other farms. It surprised and pleased her, but worried her too. (140)

Morrison makes it clear to us through Baby Suggs that "benevolent" masters are still masters, and the "good" ones were almost more dangerous than the "bad" ones because they made it easier to be content with slavery. After all it is easy to run from abuse. There really is no choice either escape or die. When there is no physical abuse it is a choice between security and the unknown. The "kindness" of the Garners made it difficult to choose the unknown even if it meant freedom.

An overriding theme throughout Morrison's *Beloved* is the toll slavery plays on the self-image of black people.

> That anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself anymore. Dirty you so bad you forgot who you were and couldn't think it up. (251)

This self-image factor is probably the most damaging flaw of slavery. It is obvious to us today that the racial justification for slavery is ridiculous. But in the era before and after the American Civil War, whites commonly believed that blacks were suited to slavery because they were physically strong and intellectually weak. They had a closer evolutionary kinship to monkeys than to humans (Mixon 27 July). Morrison's characters often compare slaves unfavorably to animals. Paul D describes himself as "something else and that something was less than a chicken . . . " (72). Schoolteacher compares the slaves to horses and hounds (150), and one of the final blows that forced Sethe to escape slavery was when she overheard schoolteacher having his students list and compare her human characteristics to her animal ones (193). Schoolteacher truly believed that slaves were "people who needed every care and guidance in the world to keep them from the cannibal life they preferred" (151). It is no surprise that Baby Suggs repeats more than once in the novel that "There is no bad luck in the world but whitefolks" (89, 104) .

Morrison's characters, while suffering the heartbreak of exclusion within American society, help define freedom and the rights of citizens beautifully and emotionally. The fact that black slaves and to some extent free blacks in the north were controlled and regulated by strict black codes made the Morrison character Paul D very aware of the judicial restrictions against blacks, even though he worked for benevolent masters at Sweet Home where they were treated like men and

> encouraged to correct Garner, even defy him. To invent ways of doing things; to see what was needed and attack it without permission. To buy a mother, choose a horse or a wife, handle guns, even learn reading if they wanted to—but didn't want to since nothing important to them could be put down on paper. (125)

All of Paul D's "rights" that he attributed to manhood are the same rights denied to blacks in the slave codes; no legal marriages, no education, no use of firearms, etc. These are also the rights the American government lists as major privileges associated with citizenship in the Bill of Rights. Paul D equates or measures manhood by the freedom to make ones own decisions and choices. Paul D later defined freedom as "a place where you could love anything you chose—not to need permission for desire . . . " (162).

Morrison's novel is set in the post Civil War state of Ohio. But she illustrates quite well that prejudice is greater in places where servitude had been abolished and worse where it has never been known (Mixon 27 July). Sethe observes that living in a free state did not erase the stigma of slavery or make all whites accepting of blacks and willing to treat them as equals. She thinks, "Freeing yourself was one thing; claiming ownership of that freed self was another" (95). Morrison could have added that the self acceptance would have been easier if northern whites had been more supportive. Even Edward Bodwin, whose father had taught him " human life is holy, all of it" (261) and who rented Baby Suggs and Sethe their home in Ohio, possessed within his own residence a degrading and stereotypical statue of a black child (255). With this type of contradiction, even in the north, it is no wonder that federal legislation was necessary to force an end to segregation throughout the entire country.

Dr. William Spengemann of Dartmouth College, when speaking of Mark Twain on July 27, 1992 said, "Experience is what you get when you don't get what you want." The slave experience in America gave us a body of legislation throughout the last 127 years that has helped define American citizenship. Since denying citizenship to a large minority, the American government has attempted to redress the grievances of old by passing the "Reconstruction Amendments," thirteen, fourteen and fifteen. One freed all slaves, another made former slaves citizens, and the third guaranteed former slaves the right to vote (Douglass 433). After a period of retreat from this positive movement forward in the area of civil rights, we have a new emphasis upon it in the 1950s and 60s. During these decades and under the leadership of such powerful men as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we begin to see equal opportunity acts passed, equal access laws adopted, and voting privileges protected (Mixon small group 27 July). Dr. King in his "Stride Toward Freedom" speech points out that "Along with the Negro's changing image of himself has come an awakening moral consciousness on the part of millions of white Americans . . . " (187). This consciousness was and is a painful lesson for American democracy to learn and accept. The bottom line is that "If America is to remain a first-class nation, it cannot have a second-class citizenship" (King 187) of any race, creed or color. The American definition of citizenship must establish a society where all people are allowed to participate economically and politically in their country. Hopefully the one positive that came from the evil of slavery was a hard learned and well believed definition of what it means to be an American. Through the angst of her characters, Morrison demands that we acknowledge the price that has been paid for this evolving citizenship definition. Even more importantly, the buoyancy of their collective spirit underlines the value of this lesson to each of us who call ourselves American.

Amy Nelson Thibaut

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The Application of the Social Contract Theory to The Declaration of Independence and to Civil Disobedience

In the U.S.'s *Declaration of Independence*, Jefferson presents four characteristics of the social contract as he interprets it. He tells us that man is born with certain inalienable rights (life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness), that governments are created to protect these rights, that if a government does not protect these rights, the people have a right to alter that government and create a new one that will, and that man should not make such alterations for light and transient causes. While there is nothing judicially enforceable in *The Declaration of Independence*, its importance must not be minimized. It has served as our nation's conscience, as a challenge to those who would subvert democracy. The roots of civil disobedience, as advocated by Henry David Thoreau and Martin Luther King, Jr. are also found in the social contract and are justified through *The Declaration of Independence*.

Even though Thomas Hobbes is usually credited with developing the social contract theory, Jefferson's adaptation of this theory has John Locke's *Two Treaties of Civil Government* as its basis. In order to have a better understanding of how civil disobedience relates to *The Declaration of Independence*, and how both civil disobedience and *The Declaration of Independence* relate to social contract theory, it is worthwhile to review briefly how Hobbes' and Locke's interpretations of this theory differ. After examining these theories, the connection between Locke and Jefferson will be obvious, as will the logical evolution of civil disobedience as a means of obtaining the ends to which they aspire.

Hobbes describes his social contract in the *Leviathan*, which was published in 1651. He tells us that without government, man would exist in a state of nature where his life would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (85). There would be no justice because "where there is no common power, there is no law: where there is no law, no justice" (86). Man would exist in a constant state of natural war; he would become his own natural enemy, and the annihilation of the human species would be imminent. To save himself, man would be compelled to enter into a social contract by which he would give up individual freedom in return for the security and stability of a government. Once this contract was entered, it was irrevocable. The only alternative was anarchy. "While the government or state created would be artificial, the contract would be a real unity in which diverse wills would be ground into one by the stark terror of diversity and the sheer power of the surrogate" (McDonald 310). This view of man's nature is very pessimistic. While Locke's views are much more optimistic, they are not as realistic. Hobbes' perception of human nature is closer to reality because he recognizes the negative side of man, a side that Locke does not seem to acknowledge. In the state of nature, Locke sees man as good, rational, and cooperative. He believes mankind can exist in harmony with each other without the necessity of government to maintain order. Without mentioning Hobbes by name, Locke responds to Hobbes:

> And here we have the plain *difference between the State of Nature, and the State of War*, which however some Men have confounded, are as far distant, as a State of Peace, Good Will, Mutual Assistance, and Preservation, and a State of Enmity, Malice, Violence, and Mutual Destruction are one from another. Men living together according to reason, without a common Superior on Earth, with Authority to judge between them, is *properly the State of Nature*. (280)

Locke agrees with Hobbes' contention that governments are artificial in that they are man made, but disagrees with Hobbes about their necessity. Locke sees governments as created more as a convenience, to secure the inalienable or natural rights (life, liberty, and property) of the people. To Locke "property" is most important, and in fact, the term property denotes not only a man's estate, but also his life and liberty. According to Locke, while these rights cannot be taken away, or even given away, they can be exchanged for civil rights. When natural rights are exchanged for civil rights, the people are in essence creating a government. According to Locke:

> Men being, as has been said, by Nature, all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this Estate, and subjected to the Political Power of another, without his *Consent*. The only way by which any one devests himself of his Natural Liberty, and *puts on the bonds of Civil Society* is by agreeing with other Men to joyn and unite into a Community, for their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living one amongst another, in a secure Enjoyment of their Properties, and a greater Security against any that are not of it. This any number of Men may do, because it injures not the Freedom of the rest; they are left as they were in the Liberty of the State of Nature. When any number of

> Men have so *consented to make one Community* or Government, they are thereby presently incorporated, and make *one Body Politick*, wherein the *Majority* have a Right to act and conclude the rest. (330-331)

Locke therefore reasons that if governments are created as a convenience, and if the source of the government's power is from the people, then it would follow that if the government did not function as the people had intended, the people would have a right to alter or abolish that government.

Interestingly, when Jefferson adapted Locke's ideas to *The Declaration of Independence*, he chose to substitute the words "pursuit of happiness" for property. He might have done this for idealistic reasons, in that he did not want his document to appear to be either materialistically or economically motivated. In actuality, though, the colonists were very much opposed to mercantilism, the economic system which prevailed in the eighteenth century. Under this economic system, colonies such as the British American colonies, existed for the exploitation of the mother country. The colonists could, for the most part, sell only to Britain and buy many items only from Britain. They were also prohibited from engaging in certain types of enterprises that might offer competition to British industries. It is not surprising that the colonists, therefore, quickly embraced the capitalistic ideas (economic freedoms) expressed in Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, which, as chance would have it, was published in 1776.

In examining the motives or reasons behind the theories of Hobbes and Locke, it can be argued that both Hobbes and Locke are responding to political events of their day. Hobbes was writing in reaction to the chaos England endured during the deposing of Charles I. He witnessed England's return to a state of nature and natural war. Because of this, Hobbes tells us in the *Leviathan* that government, any government, even despotism, is preferable to the anarchy that occurs when the social contract is broken. Locke wrote in reaction to the Glorious Revolution. The English people deposed James II and enthroned his daughter and son-in-law, William and Mary of Orange. Locke justified this revolution through his *Two Treaties of Civil Government.*

Unlike Hobbes and Locke, Jefferson was not writing in reaction to revolutionary events. Rather his *Declaration of Independence* ushered in the American Revolutionary War. Jefferson's justifications for this war are almost identical with Locke's arguments for revolution, the arguments used to justify the Glorious

Revolution. These arguments have come to represent the United States' philosophy of government. Ironically, the American colonists were using an English argument against despotism against an English despot. Neither Locke nor Jefferson advocated spontaneous revolutions. Locke said, "Revolutions happen not upon every little mismanagement in publick affairs" (415), while Jefferson said " . . . that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable . . . " (558). Under what circumstance, then, was revolution justified?

Locke states:

> . . . if a long train of Abuses, Prevarications, and Artifices, all tending the same way, make the design visible to the People, and they cannot but feel, what they lie under, and see, whither they are going; 'tis not to be wonder'd, that they should then rouze themselves, and endeavour to put the rule into such hands, which may secure to them the ends for which Government was at first erected . . . (415)

Locke did not like to use the words *revolt* and *revolution*. He preferred *rege lare*, or "bringing the state of war," something that only a ruler could do. Here it is the king or prince who is the rebel and is responsible for the dissolution of the government. The king can bring this about if he commits one of the following five acts: first, sets up his arbitrary will in place of the laws; secondly, hinders the Legislature; third, manipulates an election to place his cronies in office; fourth, sells out his country to a foreign power; and fifth, fails to execute the laws (407-410). Locke says the legislature can also create a state of war with the people if it "endeavours to take away, and destroy the Property of the People, or to reduce them to Slavery under Arbitrary Power . . . " and the people are " . . . thereupon absolved from any father Obedience, and are left to the common Refuge, which God hath provided for all Men, against Force and Violence" (412).

Jefferson and other American patriots believed the colonists had endured the circumstances that Locke described. Jefferson states:

> That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends [the natural rights], it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. (558)

To Jefferson and many other colonists, George III, the King of England at the time of the American Revolution, had repeatedly committed acts which met one or more of Locke's five criteria for revolt. Twenty-seven of these charges against the King are enumerated in *The Declaration of Independence* including:

(1) with regard to a king setting up his arbitrary will in place of the laws:

> The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States . . .
>
> He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.
>
> He has obstructed the Administration of Justice . . .
>
> He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.
>
> [He has taken] away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Government. (558-559)

(2) with regard to hindering the legislature:

> He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.
>
> He has refused to pass Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.
>
> He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records . . .
>
> He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly . . . (558)

(3) with regard to manipulating elections to place cronies in office:

> He has made judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their office.
>
> He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance. (558)

(4) with regard to selling out his country (the colonies) to a foreign power:

> He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.
>
> He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontier, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions. (559)

(5) with regard to failing to execute laws:

> He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. (558)

Before the American Revolution actually occurred, there were heated debates in Parliament over the American colonial problem. Many members of Parliament agreed with the colonists' contentions and felt, as Edmund Burke did, that, at a minimum, direct representation by the colonists in Parliament should be granted (246). Burke, who believed more in divine right than in the social contract, recognized the legitimacy of the American cause and argued eloquently on the colonists' behalf. He pointed out that force was only a temporary solution which would inevitably lead to the necessity for more force. " . . . the use of force alone is but temporary. It may subdue for a moment, but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again; and a nation is not governed which is perpetually to be conquered" (241). In an effort to bring about conciliation, he added " . . .we have no sort of experience in favor of force as an instrument in the rule of our colonies" (241). Conciliation was not to be, however, and as a result of the American Revolution, the American colonies became the United States

After winning independence, the problem facing the American government had to do with consent. According to the social contract, before a government could be legitimate, it had to have the consent of the people—all the people. According to Locke:

> *Every Man* being, as has been shewed, *naturally free*, and nothing being able to put him into subjection to any Earthly Power, but only his own Consent; it is to be considered, what shall be understood to be a *sufficient Declaration of* a Mans *Consent, to make him subject* to the Laws of any Government.(347)

Locke goes on to explain that man can show his acceptance of a government either through express consent or tacit consent. Consequently any man giving express consent becomes a member of that society, but it was not practical to assume express consent could be obtained from all of the colonists. Therefore, the Americans solved their problem through the application of tacit consent. Locke says that ". . . every Man, that hath any Possession, or Enjoyment, of any part of the Dominions of any Government, doth thereby give his *tacit Consent,* and is as far forth obliged to Obedience to the Laws of that Government, during such Enjoyment, as any one under it . . . " (348). What the Americans did was reason that anyone who stayed in the United States gave tacit consent to the government and should obey its laws.

After the problem of consent had been solved, the larger problem of creating a new social contract (government) that the safety and happiness of the people remained. The use of civil disobedience emerged as a possible solution. The term "civil disobedience" means nonviolent opposition to a government policy or law by refusing to comply with it, on the grounds of conscience. This philosophy should not be mistaken for an endorsement of anarchy. Civil disobedience recognizes the need for order, and those who advocate the use of this technique usually have a sense of obligation to their government.

By appealing to the principles within the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, Henry David Thoreau stirred the national conscience with "Civil Disobedience," which was published during the Mexican War. The continuing application of this concept has been a challenge to those who would subvert democracy, not only in the United States, but also around the world. Moreover, this technique has produced the same results as a revolution but without the degree of violence normally associated with revolts of arms. In this country, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s implementation of civil disobedience helped end segregation in the 1960's, and anti-war demonstrators who used the tactic were instrumental in bringing that conflict to a conclusion in the 1970's. Thoreau's essay also served Mahatma Ghandi "as a guidebook in his campaign to free India from British rule; it also served the British Labour party in England during its early days, and it offered model and hope for the European resistance against Nazi Germany" (Miller 260).

Because the influence of Thoreau's essay has been so profound and far reaching as a continuing application of the social contract theory, it is worthwhile to examine it further. Thoreau had two major justifications for civil disobedience. First, he personally objected to the Mexican War and to the practice of slavery. He felt that by paying a tax that would support what he considered to be an unjust war which would lead to the expansion of slavery, he would be contributing to the expansion of slavery, an institution he opposed. He proclaims, "I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn" (241). Secondly, and on a more theoretical level, he believes that when a government pursues evil policies, it is each citizen's right and duty "to wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his support"(241).

The relationship of man and government, as described by Locke and Jefferson, is repeated in Thoreau's philosophy. In "Civil Disobedience" Thoreau reaffirms the individuality of man, with government, at best, only an expediency. Thoreau says, "A single man can bend [government] to his will" (260). He believed that if citizens of good will were willing to unite and go to prison for their beliefs, each would constitute a majority of one to resist what he perceives as an unjust act (241).

In assessing man's political position Thoreau concludes, "There will never be a really free and enlightened State, until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly" (243). This is, of course, a major point that both Locke and Jefferson were also making. In addition, there are at least five other contentions Thoreau carries forward from Locke and Jefferson. All three of these philosophers advocate, first, that government should be limited; second, that people should not obey laws that cause injustice; third, that government cannot touch the intellectual or spiritual part of a person (Locke is not so easily placed in this category); fourth, that unjust governments may be changed or abolished; and finally, that the goal in the evolution of government is the supremacy of the people (241-243). Civil disobedience, therefore, serves to revitalize social contract theory and the Declaration of Independence. Only as long as the ideas of Locke, Jefferson, and Thoreau, continue to live, as they do in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, our nation's conscience, will governments remain responsive to protecting the life, liberty, property, and pursuit of happiness of their citizens.

Nancy Hunter

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How Life-Long Exclusion Affects an Individual's Act of Civil Disobedience

Citizenship is the membership of individuals within a given community. Membership within that community constitutes certain obligations of behavior, responsibility, and participation within that community in order to maintain inclusion in that community. Obligations for inclusion are usually agreed upon by the members of the community, and those members who do not (or *cannot*) commit to these obligations are then excluded from membership in this community. As Rousseau states:

> This act of association produces a moral and collective body, composed of as many members as there are votes in the assembly, which from this act receives its unity, its common self . . . The associates take collectively the name of "people," and separately that of "citizens," as participating in the sovereign authority, and of "subjects," because they are subjected to the laws of the State. (15-16)

Some questions then arise: If a member of this community has been excluded for the duration of a life-time, is this individual obligated to follow the written and unwritten law of that community? Is this individual justified in committing acts of civil disobedience? More importantly, should the individual be punished (physically or socially) for not committing to the obligations of a community that has conditioned him/her to social exclusion?

Civil disobedience occurs when an individual intentionally displays action or behavior that defies written or unwritten laws of a community with the full knowledge of the consequences upon the individual of such action or behavior. Acts of civil disobedience occur for social, religious, or political reasons. Often the individual who commits an act of civil disobedience wishes to demonstrate an opinion against a community's written or unwritten laws. While the individual realizes that it is criminal behavior, in his view, obeying that particular law is a greater crime. Often, the consequences of such acts of civil disobedience cause the individual to be excluded from that community. As Rousseau states:

> Further, every malefactor, by attacking the social right, becomes by his crimes a rebel and a traitor to his country; by violating its laws, he ceases to be a member of it and, in fact, makes war upon it. The existence of the State then becomes incompatible with his; one of the

> two must therefore perish; and when the criminal is executed he suffers less as a citizen than as a enemy. (31)

Yet, there is evidence that the individual's previous experiences in exclusion are *the cause* of the act of civil disobedience.

Sethe's thoughts and actions in *Beloved* show that her life-long exclusion as a black female slave caused her to commit an act of civil disobedience by killing her child. She carried an attitude that no matter what she did, right or wrong, she would *always* be excluded from American society. Sethe vowed that despite all of the horrors visited upon her as a black female slave, she would *never* subject her children to such atrocities that drove her to live each day with the deep-buried memories and the conviction that she must protect her children, no matter the cost:

> Where I was before I came here, that place is real. It's never going away . . . if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again . . . Because even though it's all over—over and done with—it's going to always be there waiting. That's how come I had to get all my children out. No matter what. (36)

Sethe never had a traditional "family unit." She did not even know what it meant to belong to a family or to love:

> Of that place where she was born (Carolina maybe? or was it Louisiana?) she remembered only song and dance. Not even her mother, who was pointed out to her by the eight-year-old who watched over the young ones . . . (30)

When it came time for Sethe to get married and to start her own family, she felt even more the outsider. Sethe did not know how to proceed into this marriage:

> When he asked her to be his wife, Sethe happily agreed and then was stuck not knowing the next step. There should be a ceremony, shouldn't there? A preacher, some dancing, a party, a something. (26)

This exclusion from normal family behavior and traditions is even more evident when Sethe asks the advice of Mrs. Garner, whom Sethe sees as a personification of proper society, society that does not include Sethe:

> "But I mean we want to get married."
>
> "You just said so. And I said all right."
>
> "Is there a wedding?"
>
> Mrs. Garner put down her cooking spoon. Laughing a little, she touched Sethe on the head saying, "You are one sweet child." And then no more. (26)

The greatest exclusion of all for Sethe which was due to her lack of familial ties was her inability to allow herself to love. As Paul D observes in Sethe's passionate defense of Denver:

> For a used-to-be-slave woman to love anything that much was dangerous, especially if it was her children she had settled onto love. The best thing, he knew, was to love just a little bit; everything, just a little bit, so when they broke its back or shoved it in a croaker sack, well, maybe you'd have a little love left over for the next one. (45)

This exclusion from a normal family life of loving and nurturing caused Sethe to see no criminal wrong in killing her baby. The only wrong Sethe could comprehend in the predicament that forced her to kill was her allowing schoolteacher to take her children back to the life she had once lived. For this reason, Sethe's attempt to kill all of her children (and succeeding with one) was an act of civil disobedience that caused further exclusion for her. Baby Suggs excluded Sethe because she resigned herself to hopelessness in reaction to how their life-long exclusion caused Sethe's killing of the baby. Whereas Sethe reacted violently, Baby Suggs simply gave up on life:

> The onslaught of her fatigue, like his, was sudden, but lasted for years. After sixty years of losing children to the people who chewed up her life and spit it out like a fish bone; after five years of freedom given to her by her last child, who bought her future with his . . . to acquire a daughter and grandchildren and see that daughter slay the children (or try to); to belong to a community of other free Negroes—to love and be loved by them, to counsel and be counseled, protect and be protected, feed and be fed—and then to have that community step back and hold itself at a distance—well, it could wear out even a Baby Suggs, holy. (177)

Then, Baby Suggs' death caused the black community to further exclude Sethe and Denver:

> Years ago—when 124 was alive—she had women friends, men friends from all around to share grief with. Then there was no one, for they would not visit her while the baby ghost filled the house and she returned their disapproval with the potent pride of the mistreated. (96)

Denver excludes Sethe (at first) when Denver becomes attached to Beloved.

More importantly, Denver detaches herself from her mother because she did not understand the community's questions and rumors concerning the killing and Sethe's imprisonment. Denver experienced her own exclusion because of her mother's act. Therefore, Denver's exclusion from the community further alienates her from Sethe. Paul D excluded Sethe when he leaves after hearing from Stamp Paid about Sethe's history in that community. Paul D excludes and leaves Sethe because he, too, does not understand Sethe's reason for killing the baby:

> This here Sethe was the very same reason a room-and-board witch with new shoes was welcome. This here Sethe talked about love like any other woman; talked about baby clothes like any other woman, but what she meant could cleave the bone. This here Sethe talked about safety with a handsaw. It scared him. (164)

More importantly, Sethe's guilt allowed her to internally exclude herself from her family, the black community, and her chance of a future as a *free* black woman. In a mental conversation with Beloved, Sethe again justifies her killing of Beloved:

> I don't have to be sorry about getting only one word, and I don't have to remember the slaughterhouse and the Saturday girls who worked its yard. I can forget that what I did changed Baby Suggs' life. No Clearing, no company. Just laundry and shoes . . . I didn't understand it then. I thought you were mad at me. And now I know that if you was, you ain't now because you came back to me and I was right all along: there is no world outside my door. (184)

In this mental conversation with Beloved, Sethe realizes that she is not able to become a true member of her family's and the black community's inclusion, and is never able to include herself in the control of her own life. Sethe's act of civil disobedience causes Sethe to punish herself more than the community could ever have punished or excluded her. Sethe's exclusion from life before and after her act of civil disobedience causes her to completely exclude herself from life. Like Baby Suggs, Sethe goes to bed to wither away and die. In the final lines of the novel, Sethe tells Paul D: "She left me / . . . She was my best thing" (272). This statement makes the reader question whether Sethe meant Denver's leaving or Beloved's. In my opinion, this statement is a final testimony to Sethe's *ultimate* exclusion, that of her babies, and her acknowledgment of it.

Julie Gardner

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The Adventures of Eros Gonamuck

You don't know me, without you have read any of a number of books of western civ., but that ain't no matter. My story couldn't be no less a part of you if you had. What I been doin', you been doin', one way or t'other, as long as I can remember.

The first time I bedded down with somebody, I knowed it was right—and right after, I knowed it was wrong. I don't know why. Seems mighty peculiar to me somehow. I've heard it called "post" something or other. I disremember right now. But leastways it was mighty good and then it warn't. Can't rightly figure. But I know that just as I described it, you know it. See?

And then I killed my woman, and you say, "That ain't like nothin' I'd ever do!" But all the same—all the same. Don't tell me. Perhaps you've never did somethin' like that. So don't talk to me. We're just as different as we are alike. And you can't change it.

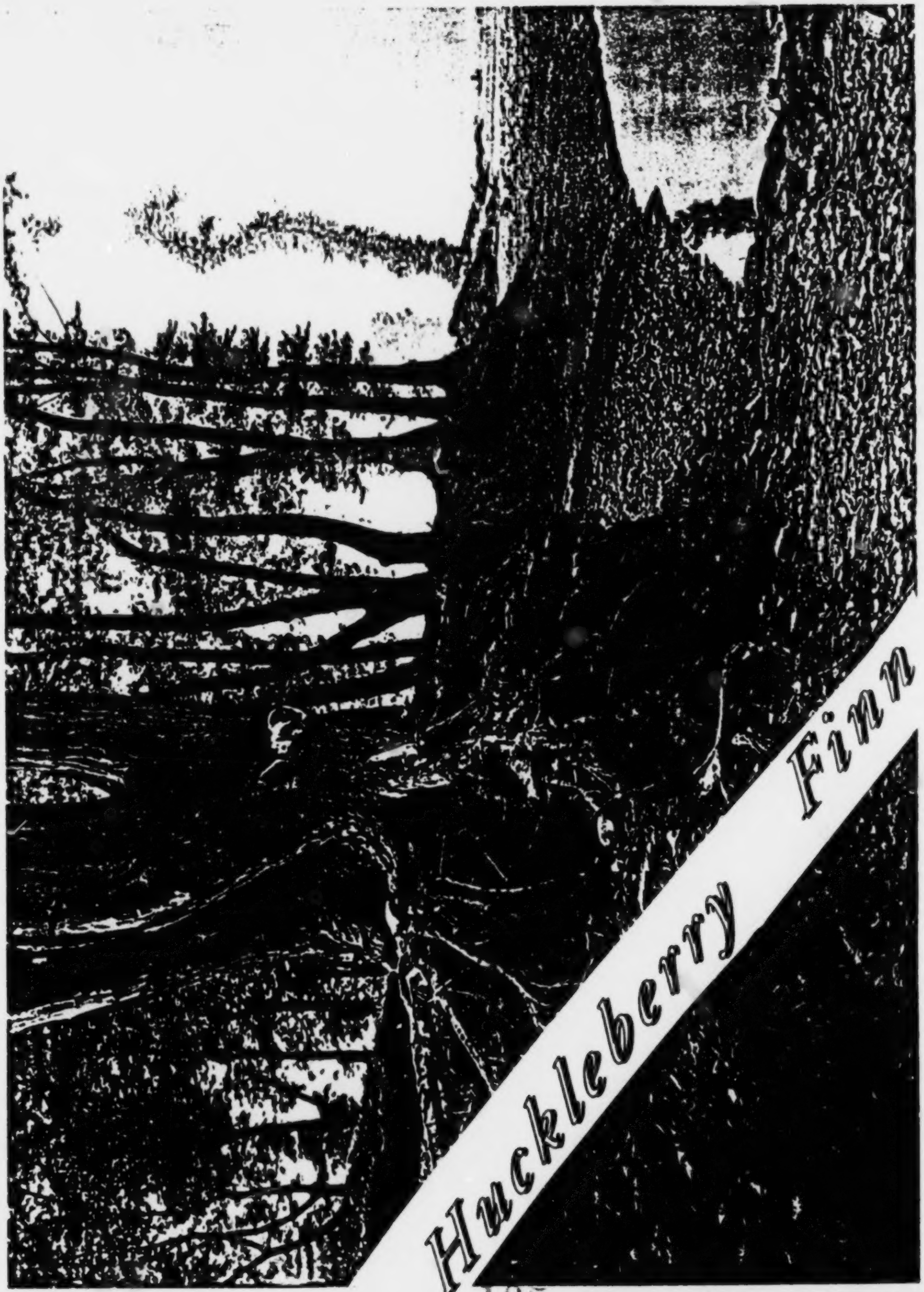
And I've killed my children, too. And you don't know. How are you going to know, when you didn't? Can't you look inside? It's an eros thing, so you've got to understand.

The green-eyed monster, the slithering intestine. Don't tell me you don't know them. They're all over you. Crawling on you, crawling in you, eatin' their way through and through. That alien that popped out o' yer belly was in there or it wouldna come out. Hubris ain't nothin' but a step-child to that.

You'll swagger and that's just a lie, and a lie is just stealin' the truth of some other circumstance, and stealin' is alimentary. You'll puff up like a blow-fish only 'cause there might be somethin' bigger in somebody's rememory.

Not knowin' me's like sayin' water ain't wet. Some books 'ould help, but I'm in there anyway, so don't tell me, you been there before.

Daniel Stevens


Huckleberry Finn

A Walk on Troja Island, 1940-45

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Huck—A Good Ol' Boy

I dillied and I dallied
And said all I could say.
I knew the rules and lessons,
But I weren't willing to play.

I 'scaped from an eerie island
And a mean ol' nasty pap.
Only to encounter a mighty river
And some despicable, rapscallion saps.

Learnin' about society
Caused rancor and disgust,
But being only a poor ol' boy,
I lingered in society's dust.

But, when it comes to laws and conscience
I was forced to admit
That learnin' from within
Means more than Widow's list.

Civilized voices, swirling all around,
Say, "Huck, you gonna burn in hell
If Jim, the slave, goes free."
"But wait," says I, "listen to me well,"

Did you ever feel that feeling, deep inside
When you know that somethin's true?
And you try to fool your conscience,
But you end up feeling blue.

Little did I know then
That my conscience served me well
'Cause civilized citizens and judges
Could never ever tell
That their scripture, laws, and biases
Pave their way to hell.

My actions pleased my conscience
And I helped ol' Jim go free.
And as I talked today with wise ol' Socrates
You know just where I be.

I watch the wise ones now
Who devour my adventures
And know that I have done my job
As smiles creep 'cross their dentures.

For in their hearts they know right is right
When Mark Twain made me act
Against the need for Whites to down the Blacks
And Folks, that's just plain ol' fact.

Dona Holloway

Deceit And Democracy: Huckleberry Finn As A Disturbing Presence

> Thus the stars wink upon the bloody stripes, and Liberty pulls down her cap upon her eyes, and owns Oppression in its vilest aspect, for her sister. (Dickens 341)

It would seem empirically impossible for a self-proclaimed democracy to maintain sufficient self-deception by giving continuing consent to racial oppression. In the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, however, Mark Twain mirrors this dichotomy. The political philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau can help us understand how Twain indicts us as late twentieth century readers for our complicity in the "general will" which continues to sanction this unseemly coupling.

Consider first the structure of the novel. Although there is considerable disagreement among Twain critics about the meanings of the structure and the relative value of its parts, there is apparent consensus that the book consists of three basic sections: scenes before the river sequence, the river sequence itself, and the so-called "evasion" sequence which follows the river adventure. This three-part construction can be broken down further by noting the changes in fictional modes. The novel starts as local color (Chapters 1-6), unfolds into an idyllic adventure story down the river (Chapters 7-16), evolves into social satire (Chapters 17-32), and ultimately emerges as a burlesque of Gothic fiction (Chapters 33-43). This structure, however flawed or weak, or, perhaps, *because* of its inherent weakness and flaws, directs our attention to the dual American societal pillars of liberty and oppression. In Rousseau's philosophy, these pillars can be seen to comprise "the general will." This "general will," as shown in the first section of the novel, depicts a society in which the grand notion of democracy is given steadfast lip-service by its citizens; their daily behavior, however, reverses its meaning. Twain dramatizes the ambivalence of a society where "respectable Christians, bred on the democratic teachings of the Constitution, abuse children, shoot their neighbors in mindless feuds, rob and cheat those weaker than themselves, and enslave the black population" (Nichols 208). This society, introduced in the first section, consistently intrudes throughout the second section each time Huck and Jim are compelled to make forays from the river to the shore. Ultimately this same society controls the final section of the book.

But what about the book's midsection, the idyllic micro community established by Huck and Jim on the river? Here again Twain gives credence to a Rousseau's underlying assumption about human nature—that man is naturally good but primitive, and that the state of nature is one of ignorance and innocence but relative peace. Rousseau further states that "the only natural societies are families" (6). In this bucolic midsection, we encounter man (Jim and Huck) in his natural state, innocent and innately good. Through the increasingly caring, and therefore intimate, relationship that develops between Jim and Huck (Jim as mentor and father figure with Huck as adolescent son stretching toward moral maturity), we can glimpse a hint of Rousseau's natural family, and we behold the hope of universal brotherhood. Most importantly, we see a picture of human dignity shorn bare of any social distinctions.

How convenient for us as readers! We take satisfaction that, along with Huck, we can condemn the society which exists on the banks of the river and revel with him in the ecstasy of human connectedness. We want to identify with him. We want to stay on the raft. We have no trouble choosing between the contrasting social orders of the raft and the shore. There is not a single doubt about where we as readers yearn to be. "It did seem so good to be free again and all by ourselves on the big river and nobody to bother us. Other places do seem so cramped and smothery but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft" (Twain 155).

Our dismay when the structure of the novel returns us to the self-deceptive world called "sivilization" on the banks of the river is understandable. In reading the last twelve chapters, we are forced to deal with the temporary and tenuous nature of that marvelous river odyssey. We must concede that, though the river continues to flow, we as citizens can wade into it only too briefly. "Democracy in any age is very fragile, and effective working democracies do not survive for long." (Gorman 29 July)

The "general will" triumphs in the closing chapters of the novel, and we are not nearly as comfortable identifying with that general will as we were in identifying with the outsider Huck on the river. The novel, "in its structure, in the hell it puts its readers through at the end, the frontal debate it forces, simulates and describes the parasitical nature of white freedom" (Morrison 37) in our country.

The three-part structure of the novel is, in fact, a modified frame story with Tom Sawyer as the dominant character in the frame (first and third sections) and Huck as the dominant character in the inner story (the book's midsection). The fact that we read this book more than a century after it was written forces us to acknowledge the wholeness of the story as our cultural legacy. As American citizens, we must recognize both our Tom parts and our Huck parts:

> When Huck says 'All right, then, I'll go to hell." It is characteristically the moment we fatally approve, and approve morally. But it is with equal fatality the moment at which Huck's identity is most precariously threatened. In the very act of choosing to go to hell he has surrendered to the notion of a principle of right and wrong . . . he actually commits himself to play the role of Tom Sawyer which he has to assume in the closing section of the book. To commit oneself to the idea, the morality of freeing Jim, is to become Tom Sawyer. Here again is the irony of the book, and the ending, far from evading the consequences of Huck's act of rebellion, realizes those consequences. (Cox 356)

We are disturbingly drawn, redrawn, and drawn yet again to this masterpiece, precisely because as a national community we have not yet resolved the dilemma of living in a democracy built on a continuing denial of our long history of oppressing our fellow citizens. "The despotism of custom is everywhere the standing hindrance to human advancement" (Mill 70). Why then do we persist in wallowing in this discomforting quagmire? 1) It unmasks the violence, hypocrisy, and pretense of our America; 2) It reaffirms the values of our democratic faith, however tainted it may be; 3) It gives us a vision of the possibility of love and harmony in our multiethnic society; and 4)It dramatizes the truth that justice and freedom are always in jeopardy. "Good writing not only reflects experience; it adds to life more life. *Huckleberry Finn* is instinct with life. We can all profit by wrestling with the issues the book raises" (Nichols 120).

We stand indicted. In order to free our democracy from its historical and continuing self-deception, we are mandated, as ethical citizens, to leave behind our adolescent notion of freedom. Although, like Huck, we yearn to "strike out for the Territory," we must learn that, to rid our community of the self-deception about liberty and oppression in our history and in our present, we must examine that core wherein freedom has always lived—the territory within.

Beverly Webster

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Go with the Flow

There are just a few things that I know. I always thought that by my age, I would be knowledgeable about many things and some people. It was my fervent hope that I would advance from the psychic "gray" areas of life's enigmas to an Augustinian's vision of a *City on a Hill.* Truth would appear. Wisdom would be second nature. Sensitivity to life would intensify. Alas, that has not happened.

However, I do know about rivers. I had the privilege of living on a small river in Texas, the San Bernard, near Freeport, for many years. I came to love it, fear it, and above all, respect it. It was larger than I was with a soul that devoured my own pretentiousness. It moved me away from any belief that I could ever exceed the power of nature. It challenged every fiber of my being. A river controls any individual. The issue of control is non-negotiable. The river always wins. The individual never, but never, owns or can pretend to control the forces of the river. Living on the river means leaving the "body politic." In order to encounter the experience of the river in the most superficial of ways, one relinquishes society's "education." To survive and co-exist, it's necessary to forget some book things. The river flows, the tides rise and fall, and the river continues, replete with its own peculiarities. The San Bernard wasn't the Mighty Mississippi. It was rather insignificant in size but not in majesty and power.

Because I have been one with my river, I feel a particular kinship with Huck. For many years it gave both of us safety, sanctuary, a sense of awe, nourishment, joy, and maybe even the potential for being at peace. The river also has a sense of humor … it's as much a rascal as Huck. It's a magician, "now you see it, now you don't." So go figure. The river makes fools of the wisest of men, and wise men of fools. It's always a game of one-upmanship when one shares life with a river. Huck and I share some communality with the river. It is important to note that Twain is looking at the River through Huck's eyes. Huck's "ignorance" and lack of formal culture allows him to take the world as he finds it and report his sensations in a direct manner, the manner of a fourteen year old boy. We see the world as Huck discovers the newness of everything and everyone around him. Twain's Mississippi is a bit of a rascal. It aids and abets Huck and Jim.

Huck knew the river. He was raised on the river by Pap and various others who were the "salt of the earth." It seems ironic to me that salt poured on living things kills them. The church tries to save his soul as does the widow and Aunt Sally. All intend to "sivilize" him. They almost sivilize him to death. He did a very smart thing; he escaped to the river. The river had no real regimented or written codification of the life of a civilized human being. Huck would not have read it anyway. He knew what he "knowed." The river would provide for him all the raw materials he needed for his escape and real salvation. The river was the Father that Pap was not. All necessities could be stowed away safely, all confidences kept with no words spoken. The river provided, as a friend and confidante would, valuables necessary for the journey to continue. Huck discovered the wreck of the *Sir Walter Scott* and finds treasures. Books that might be titled *Tales of Kings and Dukes* and *King Solermum* were there for the taking (162). Huck didn't have to thank the river as he would in society. It was a given—the river would provide what society would not.

The trip on the river also reveals to Huck and Jim the violence it can bestow. (A fierce summer storm occurs that strands Jim and Huck.) However, a huge bolt of lightning reveals to them their own raft floating in front of them. The river remained a friend when society was not.

The raft remains a vision of innocence, happiness and a degree of peace. It was exhilarating for Huck and Jim to be free but Twain was well aware that there was no safe harbor or refuge from a corrupt civilization. The river couldn't save Huck because that wasn't the river's responsibility. It allowed Huck and Jim to observe from close and afar the corrupted souls of a civilization "jes' gone to hell." One has a visceral reaction to the King and Duke's trickery and treachery. The outcasts of society are enslaved, dishonest liars but they at least acknowledge that fact. Civilization on the shore is corrupt to the core.

It is unconscious irony that Huck consistently finds his way out of contradictions he experiences? He can be driven to tears over Buck's death or the con men's treatment of Jim. Huck has nightmares of the feud many times (154). However, he remains stoically unscathed, and thus he can return to the river and find release form his pain.

One knows a river will rise after a huge rain and destroy that which is in its path. That's natural law at work. One does not *know*, however, how two Christian families sit in the same church and then walk out planning the next vengeful act to keep the feud alive. Huck doesn't understand this. In the first place, he doesn't know what a feud is and more importantly, it's contrary to natural law. Wisely enough, it's time for Huck to get to the river. Feuds are not in the epistemology of an ever-flowing giver of life one finds on the raft.

A river pays no homage to the dead. Organisms perish in a natural progression, decay and are reborn into the chain of life in the river. Huck doesn't take much stock in dead people either. He cogitates on Emmaline's demise and decides that "with her disposition, she was having a better time in the graveyard" (138).

Huck Finn seems to be anti-intellectual. Rivers "don't do" syllabuses. They just are. See what I mean about the Magician? Is Twain's imagery of the river just a story or an indictment? Is it burlesque or a totally new form of imagery? Don't ask the river. Rivers keep their mouths shut until they open up into the ocean!

Huck has recurring bouts with loneliness. With Jim on the river he is less lonely and less alienated. He also finds freedom. The river has given him companionship and the ability to survive. It offers Jim and Huck a canoe, later a raft, a wrecked steamboat replete with criminals who "bring" Jim and Huck money and knives. The river may play rough, but it plays fair. That is untrue of society. On the river Huck knows the rules. On the shore, he is adrift because society seems to have no rules except chaos and chicanery. Huck senses that the shore is "mean spirited." The Mississippi was kind, safe, and generous to the "castaway" society of Huck and Jim.

> Huck is at his philosophical best when he has found Jim and says:
> "We said there warn't no home like a raft, after all. Other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and comfortable on a raft. . . . it's kind of solemn, drifting down the big still river lying on our backs and looking at the stars." (88, 158).

Huck was right. It is kind of solemn, especially if the river is somewhat still. One can stretch out and lie on one's back, look at the stars, and just be. It seems little to ask of life—and yet it's the hardest thing in the world to be able to do—move with life's flow, lie down and really look at the stars to find that sense of wonder many of us had as innocents and have somehow lost along the way to being sivilized.

I know the river would approve because its only agenda us to flow and react to natural law. Would that we were all that wise!

Sandy Watts

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Everybody Should Know My Name

Humor must not professedly teach or professedly preach, but it must do both if it is to live forever.

Mark Twain, *Autobiography*

Thirty years later in a quiet, gentle, yet intensely strong voice, Huck begins his timeless story . . .

> After leaving Aunt Sally's, I struck out for the river which was the only place I could sense the feeling of freedom. Out on the river, I once again escaped from civilization, with my inner nature at peace and Providence in control. As I floated down the river and snatched glimpses of "civilization" when I drifted ashore, I had to decide whether I wanted to essentially remain an outsider or participate in a society whose actions, code of ethics and religious morals didn't seem to match my own conscience.
>
> Much to my surprise (and yours, too, I'm sure), I often ventured ashore to learn what I could learn. Initially, I wanted to read some of those books that made Tom so worldly, but as Fate would have it, I fell in love with a librarian. My new love encouraged me to temper my selections with other works that truly opened a new world to me. Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* touched a chord within me; living on the raft and deciding about Jim's fate seemed to mirror how he wouldn't pay taxes and chose to remain true to his inner beliefs. I finally realized that I could belong to the civilized world after reading Walt Whitman, and the song in myself rang true. My very soul was touched with Plato's *Republic* and the recognition that an individual's decisions and choices truly affect the state (125). After all, isn't it true that we take from literature the part that moves us most?

In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the part that moves me most is Twain's treatment of the outsiders. He emphasizes the beauty of Jim's moral superiority and the goodness found in Huck's conscience which encourages the reader to discover Twain's subtle "layering" of the varying degrees of white insider's racist attitudes. Twain exposes these insiders and helps his readers, not of the 1880's but of the twentieth century, recognize the pervading racism, not only in the South, but in America, by writing about several personalities adverse to equality and liberty for all. The central meaning of the novel revolves around the intensification of this discovery by contrasting the "layers" of racist insiders to the moral superiority of both Jim and Huck.

Examining this central meaning in conjunction with James Baldwin's exposure and explanation of America's need for racism suggests we are similar to Twain's insiders. I believe Twain wants Huck's conscience to become our own, illustrating how one person's inner decision is truly the foundation for forcing Americans to deal with their biases and cruelties by exposing the ugly, multifaceted issue of racism, thereby encouraging each citizen to value each person as an individual and not as a member of a group.

This individualistic approach can never happen in an America where ". . . it has always been assumed that the Black's only possible aspiration would be to become White; it is very important for white people that Black people should wish to be White"(Baldwin, *Nobody* 91). Initially, even Huck demonstrates this belief when he spoke of Jim as being white on the inside. ". . . and I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks does for theirn . . . " (201) He continues to identify with Jim's whiteness, "'Ef it wuz him dat 'uz bein' sot free, en one er de boys wuz to git shot, would he say, 'Go on en save me, nemmine 'bout a doctor f'r to save dis one?' Is dat like mars Tom Sawyer? Would he say dat? You bet he wouldn't! Well den—is Jim gwyne to say it? No, sah—I doan' budge a step out'n dis place, 'dout a *doctor*; not ef it's forty year!' "I knowed he was white inside, and I reckoned he'd say what he did say" (341), yet Huck seems to not rely on this belief. He rises above the "white-inside" notion when he accepts Jim, not for what Jim could or should become, but for what he is, a loyal friend, and possibly the most morally true character in Twain's book.

Twain portrays Jim, an outsider, as kind, compassionate, all knowing, and even self-sacrificing. ". . . so Jim he said he would stand the first half of [the night watch] for me; he was always mighty good, that way, Jim was" (168). Even earlier, in Chapter 14, Twain has Huck plant in our minds the innate sense of Jim, "Well, he was right; he was most always right, he had an uncommon level head . . . " (93). And later, Jim makes the supreme sacrifice by helping the doctor tend to Tom, knowing that he would be forced back into slavery. Even though the reader never knows Jim's reaction to his sacrifice, the reader gathers that the doctor, a white insider, feels Jim's noble gesture deserves mentioning, making Twain's image of Jim as morally superior even stronger.

Jim's moral superiority seems matched by Huck's, yet it is ironic that Huck doesn't realize the goodness of his decision. " 'I won't let no runaway niggers get by me if I can help it.' They went off, and I got aboard the raft, feeling bad and low, because I knowed very well I had done wrong, and I see it warn't no use for me to try to learn to do right" (127). Twain uses Huck's innocent voice to plant the idea in his reader's mind (maybe even in his own) that protecting a friend, no matter what color was a foreign thought—yet a right one. Even so, Huck continually examines his acceptance of Jim. "It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger—but I done it, and I warn't ever sorry for it afterwards, neither" (105). Overcoming preconceived notions, Huck's inner voice dominates his decisions, and he unconsciously feels "dehumanization of the Negro then is not indivisible from our dehumanization of ourselves (Baldwin, *Notes* 25) As an individual, experiencing Jim as a friend, Huck accepts his decisions about Jim, but when forced to deal with Jim's freedom and the white insiders' slave society, his struggle intensifies.

Huck's final decision with this dilemma is morally superior to the society he has been raised in, yet he continues to doubt his choice of helping Jim to freedom again and again. " 'I was a trembling, because I'd got to decide, forever, betwixt two things, and I knowed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself: 'All right, then, I'll go to hell' and tore it [the letter to Miss Watson] up' " (270-71). Not a whim or just a convenient choice of the moment, this decision becomes the center of the novel where Twain emphasizes that the risk is worth taking because Huck's conscience is truly controlled by Providence and his inner voice. ". . . [I was] just trusting to Providence to put the right words in my mouth when the time come; for I'd noticed that Providence always did put the right words in my mouth, if I left it alone" (277).

His trust in Providence (some external guidance that provides the right answers, for the right moral reasons, that eventually leads one to Heaven) originates with Widow Douglas' influence when she encouraged Huck to ". . . help other people, and do everything I could for other people, and look out for them all the time . . . " (13). We yearn for Huck to apply that wisdom to his actions when he saves Jim and to discover the morality of his decision to help Jim, but he never does. Nonetheless, the we sense that his conscience permeates the book as a central concern, and Huck continues to tug at our own consciences. "Human beings can be awful cruel to one another" (290). Simple, yet realistic, Huck's words force us inward upon ourselves. Why are we so cruel? Twain uses this opportunity to expose the white insiders.

Focusing on Jim's moral superiority and Huck's conscience helps Twain repudiate the white racist insiders whom he has masterfully "layered." Widow Douglas tries to encourage old Miss Watson not to sell Jim down the river, but she refuses. Widow Douglas and later the doctor comprise the first layer (and least oppressive) that Twain exposes—those who accept slavery (blacks have their place) and the inferiority of blacks but who also want them to be treated humanely.

The next layer contains Colonel Sherburn who accuses the lynch mob of being cowards, indicting the white insiders' code of ethics. " ' If any real lynching's going to be done, it will be done in the dark, southern fashion;' " (191) implying a connection to the KKK element of American society. This indictment coincides with another layer of characters—Aunt Sally's neighbors who want to lynch Jim, but who immediately recant when they might be held financially responsible. Pap represents yet another layer, " 'but when they told me there was a State in this country where they'd let that nigger vote, I drawed out. I says I'll never vote agin. . .' " (34). Pap's words seem to indicate that he needs someone lower than himself in order for him to have any self worth, possibly the worst example of racism in Twain's layering because no one can give someone else self worth.

Interspersed between these layers are the King and Duke who sell Jim with no thought about Jim's feelings, and then Aunt Sally who accepts the value of blacks only as property. " 'Good gracious! anybody hurt?' 'No'm. Killed a nigger.' 'Well, it's lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt '" (279).

These same layers exist in twentieth century fiction and mirror our society's concerns like Twain's layers possibly mirrored his. Widow Douglas becomes the mother in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* when her initial reactions don't match the beliefs she had taught her daughter; Aunt Sally miraculously turns in to *Beloved*'s Mr. Bodwin who attempted to treat the Negro better, but never as a human equal; Pap finds a voice in *All in the Family's* Archie Bunker, a bigot whose racial slurs assure him of some righteous superiority. The most poignant and reflective example rests in the relationship between Amy Denver and Sethe as it compares to Huck's relationship with Jim. "It was the voice full of velvet and Boston and good things to eat that urged her (Sethe) along and made her think . . ." (Morrison 34). The power and intensity of this scene and Morrison's serious voice throughout *Beloved* does not lessen the impact of Twain's voice when Jim praises Huck for helping him. " 'Pooty soon I'll be a-shouting for joy, en I'll say, it's all on accounts o' Huck; . . . you's de bes' fren' Jim's ever had' " (125). Both outsiders, Amy and Huck helped a slave gain freedom, both were poor "white trash", and both acted compassionately and morally superior to the white insiders.

All of these layers of fictional characters also correspond to Baldwin's attitude about American whites in *Nobody Knows My Name* as he confronts us with "Segregation has allowed white people, with scarcely any pangs of conscience whatever, to create, in every generation, only the Negro they wished to see" (96). Each of Twain's "layers" certainly had the Negro in mind that it wished to see. Twain's era didn't specifically deal with segregation as we know it, but he dealt with the same underlying attitude that perpetuates segregation—superior/inferior—which has kept alive the controversy of the insiders versus the outsiders.

And only Huck's conscience, Jim's moral superiority, and their close friendship work to destroy that racist attitude.

Baldwin wants us to destroy that attitude, too, and continues with "color has a relevance ... some emotional relevance ... I mean it persists as a problem in American life because it means something, it fulfills something in the American personality" (*Nobody* 151). It is this very personality, distorted by preconceived notions, (keep in mind Miss Watson, Aunt Sally, her neighbors, and Pap) that Mark Twain so artfully attacks, in all of its racist layers. Exposing these layers elevates our perception of Jim's morality even more and applauds Huck's conscience. Jim becomes an heroic victim, being both morally superior yet degraded as a "nigger," and Huck becomes a modern day hero striking down racist judgments of Jim.

The strength of Huck's heroism becomes crucial for all of us. "A country is only as good I don't care now about the Constitution and the laws,—a country is only as strong as the people who make it up and the country turns into what the people want it to be" (Baldwin, *Nobody* 152); Huck helps us look inward and take our own personal inventory which can, in turn, produce the goodness and strength that Baldwin refers to. Huck and Jim's relationship gives the reader a black-white experience which may prove invaluable to us in today's world.

One outsider, whether fictitious or real, can make a difference in the conscience of each individual citizen and thus eventually alter a nation's course of action. Caesar Chavez, a leader of migrant farm outsiders, and Martin Luther King, Jr. testify to this statement. Huck's decision to help Jim created a thread in a quilt of conscience that has continued to grow, stitch by stitch, proving that the importance of one person's decision is truly the basis of helping others make personal ethical decisions. When the quilt is finished, we will be able to say the pledge of allegiance and believe it because we, too, will have made the same realization that Huck made.

> My hypothetical twentieth century Huck finishes his story . . .
>
> The more I studied, the more I came to realize that my conscience had not lead me astray in my decision to help Jim escape slavery. "Nature made us friends, but slavery made us enemies" (Douglass 87). I finally began to understand that each American must search from within, and I guess that is why I've become timeless. My conscience helped me choose the right action when the white insiders in my limited world would not only not accept my choice, but would never have acted as I did. I had penetrated to the secret of all slavery and of all oppression, and had ascertained their true foundation to be in the pride, the power, and the avarice of man (Douglass 85). I leave you today to ponder my effect upon the souls of the twentieth century. I pray that you listen to your conscience and that Providence guides you, too.

Dona Holloway

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Embraced and Excluded

When our vegetable co-op purchased cabbage a few weeks ago, I automatically thought of Huck Finn. In fact, I can safely say that every time I see a cabbage, I at once think of Huck and the Widow Douglas as well. It may seem an odd connection, but the mind makes funny associations, and the mere sight of cabbage is mental "super glue" to me.

The last time I cooked fresh cabbage, my husband feigned illness for the entire evening. He made at least two trips to the medicine cabinet for some Maalox, claiming that the mere odor of cabbage literally made him nauseated. At every possible opportunity, he made sure I caught his spastically undulating right hand, fanning to and fro, to and fro, as a testament to his highly offended olfactory senses. Was this the first time I had cooked cabbage? Certainly not. I have, at rare intervals, chanced the cabbage, and I have endured verbal and visual assaults for my efforts. It matters little if I cook the cabbage with or without seasonings, with or without bacon or onions; my mate simply loathes the smell of cabbage, and he makes my life miserable when I cook it. Aside from the fact that my husband has, over the years, steadfastly refused to touch so much as one speck of cooked cabbage to his ruby lips, I have little patience with his obdurance. The man is an enigma. While he curls his lip at my extremely rare cabbage cooking forays, he frequently, insistently, loudly, and cockily puffs away at the most repulsive smokable items he can possibly procure. My mate smokes cigars, and, much to my amazement, he actually seems to relish this act. To heighten the drama, he will defiantly smoke his stogies in our home. Now, cigar smoke not only enlivens my allergic tendencies, it also produces for me—de facto—the nausea that my husband *claims* cooked cabbage produces for him. Over the years the irony grows stronger, and I stand increasingly amazed at my husband's hatred of the smell of cooking cabbage and his love of the smell of "the leaf."

The malignant association of four seemingly benign objects (Huck, the Widow Douglas, cooking cabbage, and burning cigars) and the irony of the situations are at once evident in the words of Huck as he remarks upon the Widow's objection to his smoking habit,

> That is just the way with some people. They get down on a thing when they don't know nothing about it. Here she was a bothering about Moses, which was no kin to her, and no use to anybody, being gone, you see, yet finding a power of fault with me for doing a thing that had

> some good in it. And she took snuff too; of course that was all right, because she done it herself. (3)

The widow's logic is amusing to us, but it is also most regrettable because we recognize it for the hypocrisy that it expresses. Huck certainly doesn't miss the hypocrisy in the Widow's attitude, and neither does any modern American. It is a simple case of the old "Do as I say, not as I do," syndrome. We, as American citizens, daily ask ourselves how legislators can pound the podium in reference to the burgeoning cost of the savings and loan debacle when the same podium-pounders have, in certain instances, been guilty of perpetrating worthless checks on the house bank. Yes, Americans know that no records were kept, no statements were mailed, and no taxpayers' monies were spent in the house bank scandal. We hoot sadistically at the irony of the "gov'ment" getting caught with its pants down, but an economically aching America resents the cheeky, blatant hypocrisy nonetheless. What Americans are subtly asked to digest is the same thing that Huck, in principle, instinctively knew. The house bank ran an open-ended, interest-free loan service for its elite membership, and the management and membership were hopelessly, sadly, and hypocritically out of touch with mainstream America. These politicians actually expected the public to "understand" the special set of circumstances that apparently applied only to members of Congress, but did not extend to the circumstances of average American workers. This is the democratic process? Huck would know what was what, though. Huck knows that the Widow's exhortation is pretty nervy, but he also knows that she will continue to chastise him, regardless of her own personal habits. So what if she "done it herself?"

How aptly Huck's homilies resonate for us even now, as Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* teaches us much about cabbage, cigars, widows, poor boys, the elected and the electors. Twain's most endearing bastion of a quasi-savvy naiveté is the mouthpiece exposing the ironies and hypocrisies of our culture. With the widow's words still ringing in his ears, he would probably guess that we Texans would re-elect Charlie Wilson next time around, no matter how many rubber checks he wrote. That's just the way it is with some people.

While the foibles and inconsistencies of our legislature might drive the modern temper berserk, certain subtle inconsistencies and ironies are paralleled in Huck's world and are similarly upsetting and puzzling. Americans in 1992 are a largely "anything goes" bunch by reputation, but Huck comes of age in a society or culture that seems to have definite ideas about right ways and wrong ways of behaving. At least people say they do. This implies the definite existence of social insiders and outsider.

Upon a very close inspection of the social structure of the novel, however, a smaller group of "outsiders" can catch the reader's notice. Twain gives us a few characters who I call inside-out dwellers. These characters are ostensibly outsiders, but they become temporary participants or sharers in a society that wants the appearance of rejecting these unacceptable characters. On the surface, this entire concept seems to be an impossibility, but it is not. Consider the King and the Duke. These men are societal cliff dwellers, yet they manage to drift fairly easily in and out of many social circles. Pap Finn also merits inspection as a very interesting social enigma. Pap certainly embodies everything malevolent in any functioning society, yet he commands time and attention from a most respected quarter of society. Lastly, consideration must be given to the idea that Huck himself is an inside-out dweller in a peculiar way. He is outside the social circle in that he is a virtually parentless, poverty-stricken street urchin, but he is scooped up by a "pillar of society," the Widow Douglas. The question that fascinates in all three of these instances is this: What sort of society allows this bizarre and selective fluidity? In all three cases, Twain seems to be suggesting that society has rules that are not really rules at all; they can be fluid or frozen, depending upon the peculiar needs not of the out dweller but of the society itself.

Scrutinize, first of all, the unusual circumstances of the King and the Duke. Today, they would probably be fabulously wealthy pimps or marginally successful mid-management types in a middle-class crack house. In either case, they would be outside the bounds of society, but would sell society that which it pretentiously says it does not want, but which it secretly craves. These men sold misguided, faulty dreams; and society needs these characters. The very simple fact that the duke has managed to get himself in trouble with "an article to take the tartar off the teeth—and it does take it off, too and generly the enamel along with it" (160) testifies to the strong human need to be accepted, to be better than we are. After all, tartarless teeth are whiter teeth, and whiter teeth are prettier teeth, and "prettier" is a valuable trait, even though a Bible quoting society never credits the Bible with definite references to the moral or spiritual value of "prettiness."

We should not, of course, fault humanity for its tendency to be human, but Twain drives a very hard critical point with the qualities he attributes to the King and the Duke. These two "rapscallions" are closer to being pimps or drug dealers than we'd like to admit. They play society like the proverbial fiddle, tapping into weaknesses and vulnerabilities in an insidious, and later, treacherous fashion. We need only to look at what they did in Pokeville to get an idea of how society loves to hate these men.

When we see the King go to the Pokeville camp meeting and manage to "fleece the flock" of eighty seven dollars and seventy five cents, we cluck at the stupidity of people who would so foolishly throw away good money. Couldn't they see that this was a con-man, a fraud with a story as leaky as an aging pirate ship? Of course they could see it as plainly, almost, as we do. Why then, do they allow themselves to be conned? Maybe such fleece jobs are not too hard to understand, and Twain seems to suggest that the taken are victims of their own hypocrisy. When the King begins his tearful tale of thirty years of piracy, he has chosen a most opportune moment to do so. A rather histrionic preacher has just lathered the crowd to a peak of shame and tears, and the sinners are venting their guilt through their sobs and anguish when the King seizes the day. Here was a chance to repent and acknowledge, publicly no less, one's human tendencies to sin against very strictly interpreted Biblical law. Here was a purging of great emotional value for the people of Pokeville. Basking in one more opportunity to attain God's grace and forgiveness, and hence, the gates of heaven itself, this mournful bunch empties their pockets for another sinner who is, comparatively speaking, in much worse spiritual shape than any of the Pokeville crowd could imagine. If God could see fit to inspire this slovenly, heathen pirate to come forward and bare his hideous soul, their heavenly futures were certainly secure. The King's grandiose lies simply make these people feel superior as they take stock of the balance in their moral checkbooks. What did they know of pirates? So what if he kissed a few of the worshipful young ladies a little too long or too often? This blubbering charlatan is a bigger sinner, and society is thankful for it. An amusing footnote to the hypocrisies of the day is Twain's addition of the King's extra "booty." Beyond collecting a pretty penny from the holy, the King also steals an illicit jug of whiskey" that he found under a wagon when we was starting home through the woods" (170). Good thing the folks did their moaning and mourning earlier! If we see the hypocrisy in the minor dictates of the Widow in reference to Huck's smoking, we cannot fail to see the analogy here. It is only amplified, and it makes hypocrisy a little less funny in some respects.

A great deal less humorous is the case of the shadowy and dark Pap Finn. With some alterations, he is similar to the King and the Duke. Pap Finn's role as an interloper is a societal phenomena in that there is virtually nothing likable in the character of the man. Indeed, his own son has absolutely nothing good to interject on Pap's behalf. Huck sees him with cold eyes, and that is rather easy to understand. Unlike the King and the Duke, Pap has no dreams to peddle because he is devoid of any dreams himself. Meanness, bigotry, anger and hatred are his guideposts, and the shock is that society is apparently willing to "buy" these negative commodities from this child abusing, repulsive drunk. Pap doesn't drift into town too often, but he is around enough for the townsfolk to have a clear picture of his attitudes, prejudices, beliefs, and habits. It is precisely these things which make Pap so attractive, in a perverse sort of way, to the people of the town.

What is it that makes Pap such an interesting, alluring character? It is the very wickedness of Pap which makes him the object of our inspection or dissection, so to speak, and we take great comfort in this process of dissecting undesirable behavior. Observe a group of people who are listening to the horrid details of a friend's tragic rape. They are rapt with attention, fascinated by every ugly detail, even though they are repulsed by the obvious: The rape could have been their horror story. We frequently do this sort of self-defining by observing the circumstances of others. As with the King and the Duke, society uses Pap's drunkenness, abusiveness and nastiness as a barometer to judge its own relative state. There is, however, a hitch to society's perverse analysis of its "bad elements." A society just gets lucky if they get to use the King and the Duke to purge their souls, but they are frighteningly wealthy in the predictable, volatile outbursts of Pap Finn, for Pap is the shadow that lurks in the recesses of all human experience, and it is our own potential for wickedness that terrifies us and prompts us to keep an eye on the Pap Finns of our cultures.

Could the shadowy aspects of the drunkard Finn be the catalyst in the new judge's plan to resurrect the decency in Pap? When he got out the

> new judge said he was agoing to make a man of him. So he took him to his own house, and dressed him up clean and nice, and had him to breakfast and dinner and supper with the family, and was just old pie to him, so to speak. (26)

That would appear to be a most plausible explanation for the judge's behavior, as Twain removed any element of doubt as to the true nature of Pap's character in the paragraph immediately preceding that text mentioned above. Pap has had his day in court, and he has won. True to form, he "whoops it up" all over town and manages to get himself jailed for that night and one additional week. Why else would the new judge take in the likes of Pap Finn? While Twain doesn't provide a transcript of the judicial proceedings, we can safely assume that the Widow and Judge Thatcher would have had considerable "clout" in court, and they surely would have presented a rather strong arguments against Pap's legal claim to custody of his son. To our chagrin, though, the new judge takes a familiar and safe tack on the thorny issue of child custody, and he violates society's trust in the judicial system by literally delivering Huck into bondage. In no time at all, this paragon of justice must deal with the consequences of a nodding sufferance of man's capacity to sink to levels of depravity that jeopardize the safety of the rest of the town. Add to this lapse an insistence on embracing Pap, and the judge's actions take on a new twist.

Clearly, the judge's decisions are culpable, but the very decisions themselves are the "crux" of a shadow theory, and they bear explanation. The judge takes Pap into his own home not because of his error in judgment, and not because he can be confident of his own moral rectitude or heaven bound destiny, but because Pap is the base creature within the judge's own being. Indeed, there is a potential "beast" in all of us, and we are titillated by, but safe from "the shadow" within. The judge unwittingly reacts to this shadow by keeping it at an arm's length where it can be watched. If the judge takes on the task of reforming the drunkard, he gets the opportunity to inspect the shadow closely and assure himself that this "beast" is not his own. This is a fairly intelligent response to people like Pap. The judge has already made two errors where Pap is concerned, and Pap's fall from the wagon is predictable, but the judge and society function on the premise that the devil you know is better than the devil you don't know. The judge simply has a better handle on this unknown devil by having attempted to reform Pap.

If Twain is questioning society's true motives in extending generosity to the King, the Duke and Pap, he is strongly suggesting a meritorious condemnation of society where Huck's situation is concerned. Volumes have been written about Huck's motivations. We interpret, analyze, probe and pick to answer, once and for all, if Huck knew what he was saying when he decided he'd just as soon go to hell as to betray Jim. Did he give his money, literally, to Judge Thatcher, or is the judge just the "custodian of the cash"? Was it really all that difficult for Huck to "humble myself to a nigger," for the fog scam he played on the kindly slave? Our efforts in this vein seem to largely ignore some insidiously lurking undertones in a society that plunders and pillages outsiders like Huck by embracing him only through the term of his usefulness and then unceremoniously shoving him back outside of the circle.

At the very beginning of the novel, Huck recounts the ending of his adventures with the gaudy and flamboyant Tom.

> We got six thousand dollars apiece—all gold. It was an awful sight of money when it was all piled up. Well, Judge Thatcher he took it and put it out at interest, and it fetched us a dollar a day apiece, all the year round—more than a body could tell what to do with. The Widow Douglas, she took me for her son, and allowed she would sivilize me. (1)

Huck's life has certainly changed drastically since he and Tom became rich. Miraculously, Huck has been drawn into the bosom of the town by the Widow Douglas, and the prudent judge has somehow become the broker for Huck's portfolio.

The central issue that "sticks in the craw" can be reduced to one haunting question. If Huck has lived in this little town for most of his life, why do the judge and the widow wait to take an interest in a child who has been literally homeless for years? That's the question.

The timing of Huck's "adoption" simply begs for exposure, and the juxtaposition of it with Huck's acquired wealth suggests Twain's indictment of society. The most unsettling aspect that must be considered in this issue is that the Hucks of the world, unlike the Paps, Kings, or Dukes, are innocents, and they trust too much. Huck's new status as an "insider" is totally superficial; he is "in" because of his new-found worth, and as quickly as he has gained entrance, he could be shown the exit. If these people are arguably doers of good deeds, why don't they just harbor Huck instead of making the arrangement a legal one?

A curious corollary to this concept involves a discussion of Miss Watson's relationship with Huck. The novel is rich with his denigration of her, and the reader is, by the middle of the book, thoroughly convinced that his attitude is justified. Even though Miss Watson has no legal rights to oversee Huck's activities, she seizes on every opportunity to "correct" him by hounding and nagging him about his very boyish behavior. She expresses society's discomfort with the nouveau insider. Huck is a burr under Miss Watson's saddle. He curses, smokes, has few manners, and, worst of all, he's disarmingly direct. But for his financial worth, Miss Watson could talk her sister into "dumping" Huck back by the river's edge, thereby reminding him of what an arrogant upstart he is. No wonder Huck offers her up as his "killable kin" when the gang takes its oath. Miss Watson, in pronouncing Huck a fool, pigeon-holes him into a category of society who are not even worthy of simple, common courtesy, and Huck internalizes that notion. Perhaps that is the greatest crime for which society should be held accountable in the novel. We disapprove of the methodical, legal raiding of his billfold, but raiding his soul and dignity are totally unforgivable.

And so Huck's story unfolds within a social system that is hypocritical and opportunistic. Twain paints a ghoulish picture of life, and the metaphorical dead bodies are everywhere. This society finds a use for the best and the worst people, and it embraces and excludes them at will. When a person has outstayed the tenuous welcome to the inside circle, the mat is pulled in, the character emotionally abandoned, and the door slammed shut. Perhaps this cynical interpretation can be rattled, but given Twain's late-life pessimistic bent, it seems wise to gird ourselves against the dangers of life within a voracious, all consuming society.

When we pick at the generosity of the folks in the camp meeting, chew on the judge's philanthropy, or speak with distaste of the widow's deferred adoption of Huck, are we really also indicting our own social order—our own hypocritical inability to do as we say others should do? After all, I continue to be miffed at my husband's refusal to try cabbage, but it has never entered my mind to even consider smoking cigars!

Joanne Kniffen

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What Kind of a Boy Is This?
Huck Finn and Self-Alienation

"And I about made up my mind to pray; and see if I couldn't try to quit being the kind of boy I was" (269). Huck's resolution in Chapter 31 of *Huckleberry Finn* raises several questions about our reading of Huck as a character: What kind of a boy was Huck? Why did he temporarily want to quit being that kind of a boy? Why did he ultimately decide to forget about being something different? In answering these questions I believe that we can find a new way to read this book, a reading which resolves several interpretive problems and provides a new focus for the teaching of the novel. The inconsistency which readers feel between Huck's relationship to Jim during the middle section and his relationship to Jim during the "evasion" chapters, in addition to the apparently inconsistent attitude of the book toward the issue of slavery, have been problems for general readers and for students. By locating the moral center of the book not in Huck's attitude toward Jim, but rather in Huck's attitude toward himself, we can at least reframe these problems if not resolve them.

Huck's attitude toward himself both rises out of and resists the influences of Pap Finn and the Widow Douglas. These two people represent the "[b]rutality and sentimentality [which] are the poles of corrupt feeling" (Kastely 430) in the society of St. Petersburg. Readers who find it is easy to see how Pap is a negative influence on Huck may be less easily persuaded that the widow's values are just as corrupt. Next to Pap's brutality, her sentimentality seems harmless, but, as James Kastely points out, this sentimentality harms by allowing harm. Her values support a "refusal to look at the world as it is" which Kastely sees as "a moral evasion of the human responsibility for brutality." She is complicit with brutality because she chooses to pretend that it does not exist. Although "this evasion is more a moral blindness than it is a deliberate hypocrisy," (430) it is nevertheless a corruption of human feeling and responsibility.

Both Pap's brutality and the widow's sentimentality result from an alienation of a part of the self, a refusal to accept the self as it is. Pap hates in others reminders of his own shortcomings: Huck's schooling reminds him of his own lack of education, the respectability of the mulatto from Ohio reminds him of his own failure to win respect, the care which the widow extends to Huck reminds him of his neglected responsibilities as a parent.

Pap's reactions to these reminders are overdetermined; that is, they are disproportionately intense in relation to the incident which causes them. His hatred is determined not just by its immediate cause but is also determined by all of the buried hate that the immediate cause connects with in Pap's subconscious mind. When Pap tears up Huck's "blue and yaller picture" that he won as a prize at school, he is not just discouraging Huck from attending school but, in an overdetermined act of violence, releasing onto Huck his self-hatred for not having succeeded in bettering himself. He says he'll give Huck something better—"a cowhide." Pap does not understand why he would want to beat Huck, he only knows that it would make him feel good to do it. He has no access to the source of his hatred because to realize where it comes from would be to acknowledge his own feeling of self-hatred. He has alienated the source of his hatred from his conscious mind, but he cannot prevent its power. He has no ability to understand himself because part of his personality has been exiled.

The continuum of corrupt feeling which Kastely defines positions Widow Douglas's sentimentality at the opposite end of a scale from the brutality of Pap. The widow may not seem like a person with corrupt feelings; she is, after all, the one who tells Miss Watson to "ease up" on the spelling lesson, and also the one who doesn't scold Huck for getting his clothes all dirty but only "looked so sorry." But it is the whole society in St. Petersburg, and therefore also the widow as a member of that society, who share in the blindness of sentimentality. The widow's sentimentality is certainly no more corrupt than that of the rest of St. Petersburg, but it is a greater concern in our discussion because it is a primary influence on Huck.

Although the widow's sentimentality might seem innocuous at worst, Kastely's point is that this sentimentality is blind to the brutality of the culture and is therefore in complicity with that brutality. Like a good Calvinist, the widow tries to "do everything [she] could for other people, and look out for them all the time, and never think about [her]self" (13). But as Erich Fromm points out in Man fo*r Himself*, this type of selflessness can lead to a form of self-alienation, alienating that part of the personality which naturally will want to think of and love the self:

> "Don't be selfish" is a sentence which has been impressed upon millions of children, generation after generation. Its meaning is somewhat vague. Most people would say that it means not to be egotistical, inconsiderate, without any concern for others. Actually, it generally means more than that. Not to be selfish implies not to do

> what one wishes, to give up one's own wishes for the sake of those in authority . . . it means, "don't love yourself," "don't be yourself," but submit yourself to something more important than yourself, to an outside power or its internalization, "duty." (126-7)

The widow has alienated the part of her personality which naturally is inclined toward love of self, just as Pap has alienated the part of his personality which is devoted to self-hatred.

The society which includes both the widow and Pap values and encourages self-alienation, not being the person you really are, because it values a concept of humanness which hardly anyone could naturally achieve. Those who succeed in exiling their undesirable qualities match their resulting partial personalities with partial feelings, seeing only that part of human experience which conforms to their abridged experience of themselves. The resulting form of feeling is a blind sentimentality. Those who cannot succeed in exiling the undesirable qualities, but yet cannot accept them, resort to an alienation of desirable traits (which they may not actually have but which they could potentially cultivate). This leaves them threatened by the recognition of such traits in others. The response to this threat is hatred, but although the true object of this hatred is the self, the person feeling the hatred directs it outward towards the other person. The behavior resulting from this self-alienation is overdetermined violence, that is to say brutality.

This society, driven by self-hatred toward either brutality or sentimentality, is the society which "deforms" Huck's conscience. Conscience for Huck, when he decides to pay attention to it, becomes the voice of this society encouraging self-alienation, telling him to "try to not be the kind of a boy he was."

Huck is a product of this society, just as the widow and Pap are. If he has a home at all, it is within this society. If he has a family, it is Pap or the Widow or both. (Jim functions as a family for Huck only during the time when Huck has rejected the society of St. Petersburg.) We might expect, then, that Huck, like the Widow and Pap, is partially alienated from himself. We would expect him to reject certain aspects of his personality, and would expect him to hate in others those qualities he finds lacking in himself. But Huck seems to be different; instead of being self-alienated, he is authentic; instead of being fragmented, Huck's personality is characterized by connection.

One indication of how different Huck is from other people in this society is represented in his authorship of the book. This book, unlike *The Adventures of Tom*

Sawyer, is written by the main character. It is not simply a first person narrative, but a consciously authored book; it is in this more like *Jane Eyre* than *David Copperfield*. If Huck Finn decides to "tackle" the writing of a book about his own life and his own adventures, it must follow that he has an interest in those adventures and that life. Undoubtedly, Tom Sawyer would like someone *else* to write about him (a desire to which Twain acceded); he is interested in how his life looks to other people, but he is not, himself, interested in reflecting on his own encounters with the world. Huck is.

Although Huck is not psychologically analytic nor philosophically sophisticated in his reflections, he is nevertheless reflective. He not only thinks about his life, but he finds his life important enough to write about. It was, after all, not easy for him: "if I'd a knowed what a trouble it was to make a book I wouldn't a tackled it and ain't agoing to no more" (362). This is effort that other members of this society, even Tom Sawyer, would not make, for however wonderful they think they are, they are deeply committed to being "normal" in the sense in which Ernest Becker uses this term. A "normal man" does not want to think about his own life as different from the lives of those around him. A "normal man" does not want "too much exposure"; he prefers to live "embedded in a safe frame-work of social and cultural obligations and duties" (Becker 79). A "normal man" wants to be told what to do because it relieves him of the responsibility to be himself. The normal man, then, is not interested in self-reflection, he is, in fact, fearful of it because it might lead to self-knowledge and the resulting responsibility either to consciously accept or to consciously reject a self different from the norm.

Even if self-knowledge had been a desired goal in this society, it would have been impossible for most people to achieve because they were so bound by social requirements and restrictions. The pursuit of self-knowledge cannot be carried on under the regime of somebody else's rules: Joseph Campbell could have said of Tom, but not of Huck, that "[i]t's quite possible to be so influenced by the ideals and commands of your neighborhood that you don't know what you really want and could be. I think that anyone brought up in an extremely strict, authoritative social situation is unlikely ever to come to the knowledge of himself" (143). Huck is different in being interested in knowing who he is and in not being afraid to find out.

Huck's interest in his own life does not necessarily equal authenticity, but it is a prerequisite to authenticity. Self-reflection may not in itself result in connectedness, but it is a first step towards healing fragmentation.

A fragmented personality tends to hide from itself those parts that don't enhance the ideal the person has created or accepted as his or her personality goal. Although an authentic personality may be no closer to the goal, an authentic personality will differ from a personality that is fragmented by being aware of, rather than hiding from, those qualities which are inconsistent with the goal. Of course the more attainable the goal, the better the chance of authenticity. Huck realizes that the standard of virtue to which he aspires is far from that which the widow sets for herself; but in being satisfied with a more attainable goal, Huck is able to work toward an authenticity with is inaccessible to the widow Douglas. Huck accepts in himself qualities which are condemned by society, without passing judgment on himself as a result of his acceptance.

He gets so he can "stand" school, but says, "Whenever I got uncommon tired I played hookey, and the hiding I got next day done me good and cheered me up" (18). He does not internalize society's judgment; the "hiding" hurts but does not shame him. Neither does he internalize society's judgment of cleanliness and industry; the "new ways" that he says he is getting to like "a little bit" lose their appeal once he is back to the "old ways": "I didn't see how I'd ever got to like it so well at the widow's, where you had to wash, and eat on a plate, and comb up, and go to bed and get up regular, and be forever bothering over a book" (30).

He doesn't like the widow's ways ("I didn't want to go back to the widow's any more and be so cramped up and sivilized . . . (31), but he does not dislike the widow ("she never meant no harm by it" (2). Huck is different from the other characters in this book. The widow might accuse him of settling for "ordinary" rather than trying for "special." But in embracing all of his feelings and qualities rather than alienating a portion of them, Huck is the most un-ordinary person in this book.

Since Huck does not split off and hide parts of his personality from himself, he is not susceptible to the projected self-hatred of brutality nor to the selective blindness of sentimentality. Huck can look at himself without hating himself and can look at what's bad in the world without being threatened.

In Chapter 31 Huck confronts the polarity of brutality and sentimentality focused in the issue of slavery. Slavery is unquestionably brutal, it ignores humanness, but it can be protected by a sentimentality which refuses to look closely at what slavery means. When a slave can be thought of as property, then thinking becomes distorted; sentimentality, by covering the fact of slavery's brutality, can make it seem like a crime against a slave owner to treat a slave like a human being; "good people," after all, do not steal the property of others. The brutality is hidden and ironically supported by a striving toward "virtue." Mistreatment of slaves can be excused as "for their own good," and kindness toward slaves is expected to elicit a response of gratitude and loyalty.

Huck is forced into a consideration of his place in this ethical confusion when his plans are disrupted by Jim's disappearance. Huck has just escaped from the King and the Duke who have been an obstacle to Huck's dream of comfort: his idyllic life on the raft with Jim. Huck's plans are, of course, not clear; he may be harbor irrational hopes that he and Jim can continue to travel along comfortably, perhaps forever. With the King and the Duke out of the picture, he foresees, at this point, the possibility once again of happiness. He says, "Set her loose, Jim, we're all right, now!" (266).

When he finds that Jim is missing, he does not know what to do. His discouragement issues from several sources. He guesses what has happened to Jim (the next action he takes is to ask a boy on the road about a "runaway nigger"), and knows that whereas before he had only to keep people away from Jim, he now will have to actively take Jim away from whoever has him. He also is drawn back into a relationship with the King and the Duke, just when he thought he was free of them. Perhaps worst of all, just when he thought he was "loose," he is suddenly "cabined, cribbed, confined." Since Huck's true destination is not a geographical location but a state comfort with company, he cannot continue toward that destination without Jim: that destination does not, at this moment, even exist without Jim.

Huck is unable to think, and does not have the strength to act: "Here was it all come to nothing, everything all busted up and ruined" (268). He is unable to manage without help. He is like the man described by Martin Buber who seeks some support from somewhere outside himself:

> life has become baseless for him. He cannot tread on firm soil, on firm earth. He is, so to speak, suspended in the air. And what does he want? What he wants is a being not only whom he can trust as a man trusts another, but a being that gives him now the certitude that "there is a soil, there is an existence. The world is not condemned to deprivation, degeneration, destruction. (183)

Huck's world is condemned by the King and Duke's ungratefulness, heartlessness, and greed. He has no "being" who will give him certitude. At the same time that he imagines Jim "among strangers," he also is thinking of *himself* among strangers. The answer to his need for something larger than himself and more solid is home: the cultural truths professed by St. Petersburg, what Huck calls "sivilization." He thinks of Jim back in St. Petersburg: "at home where his family was" (268), and here too we can read Huck's words as referring also to himself. In desperation, he longs for a family.

This image of home does not provide an answer to Jim's need; Miss Watson would not take Jim back, and Jim would be looked down on and be unhappy even if she would. But Huck is not just thinking about Jim; he is also thinking about himself. Rather than rejecting a return to home as a solution to the problem, which would make sense if the problem was just what to do about Jim, he allows his thoughts to stay in St. Petersburg (where after all certitude and trust seem to be present). The context of his thinking continues to be "home," but the subject of his thinking shifts from Jim to himself.

His desperation seduces him into identity with his former oppressor: "sivilization's" fragmented system of values. In *The Nature of Prejudice*, Gordon Allport points out that concentration camp victims sometimes resorted to identification with the guards, their oppressors, but "only when all other methods of ego defense had failed" (152). In his own descent into hell, Huck is at a point where his usual methods of ego defense won't work. He begins to see himself through the eyes of oppressor and judge through those eyes what he has done and what he is doing. He not only sees through the eyes of St. Petersburg, but begins to think in the language of St. Petersburg. He stops thinking about Jim as Jim, and starts identifying him as "that nigger." Even Miss Watson becomes an abstract poor old woman: "I was stealing a poor old woman's nigger that hadn't ever done me no harm (269). Unconsciously perhaps Huck supplies for himself in that ambiguous relative clause the seed of his final answer; later he will say that he "couldn't seem to strike no places to harden me against him" (270). He knows that Jim has never done him any harm.

The comfort of trust and certitude comes at the price of psychic pain and humiliation, the slap of Providence. This slap demands not honesty but duplicity from Huck; he "about" makes up his mind to "see if" he can't "quit being the kind of boy I was" (269). This is not an enthusiastic commitment; it is hedged at every possible point ("about," "see if,"), but Huck knows the voice of civilization well enough to know what it will ask: it will ask him to be something other than what he really is. In other words, it will ask him to begin hating, rejecting, or repressing some parts of himself.

When he finds he can't pray a lie because he couldn't hide from himself the knowledge that his heart wasn't right ("It weren't no use to try and hide it from Him. Nor from me neither") (269), he decides to write the letter to Miss Watson revealing Jim's whereabouts. Maybe he hopes that writing a lie will be easier; maybe he thinks he can hide better in writing. Once he has the act done, he relaxes his defenses. He has now in a tangible document established himself in the spiritual community of St. Petersburg, the gates of Heaven have opened for him. There is soil; there is existence. In this moment and for this moment Huck erases the difference between himself and all the others.

The spiritual community of St. Petersburg is sustained by self-hatred. Without self-hatred, the desirability of fragmentation looses its potency. It is Huck's lack of self-hatred which allows his authenticity to reemerge and allows Huck to reject a life of normalcy. In tearing up the letter, Huck does not reject slavery, nor is his major decision the decision to free Jim. Huck's major decision in this chapter, and his major decision in the book, is to be the kind of boy he is; to accept himself. To the society of St. Petersburg this may sound more like a defeat than a triumph since that society assumes that the inner self is negative and destructive. But although in itself this decision does not commit Huck to any particular course of action or system of value, it is the necessary first step toward humanness and humane treatment of others. If we assume, contrary to St. Petersburg wisdom, that the true inner self is basically constructive and positive, then self-acceptance and self-integration rather than self-discrimination and self-rejection will lead to the best chance of positive growth. Carl Rogers in a conversation with Martin Buber contrasts this idea to the common idea held by many that the inner core is negative:

> It seems to me that orthodox psychoanalysis at least has held that when the individual is revealed, when you really get down to what is within the person, he consists mostly of instincts and attitudes and so on which must be controlled. That runs diametrically contrary to my own experience, which is that when you get to what is deepest in the individual, that is the very aspect that can most be trusted to be constructive or to tend toward socialization or toward the development of better interpersonal relationships. (Buber 180)

To be accepting of what you authentically are is not self-love. Self-love *approves* of everything in the personality. It is an unlikely condition for an honest person to find himself in. But many people achieve self-love through exiling those aspects of the personality which cannot be loved. This must be accomplished on a deep level, an unconscious level, or it will not have the desired effect of permitting self-love. It is this deep level of deception that I am calling self-hatred. It is, ironically then, only through self-hatred that self-love is possible.

Lack of self-hatred does not release a person to love everything about himself, but it allows him to be honest with himself and love himself in a general way, in spite of recognizing many aspects of his personality which are not lovable. The emotional system controlled by the poles of brutality and sentimentality does not allow this self-recognition. The behavior of a self-deceived person may appear on the surface to be ethically superior to the behavior of what I am calling an "authentic" person, but the authentic person has the possibility of change and growth; the self-deceived person, since he does not admit to himself why he chooses to act as he does, cannot make authentic and permanent decisions about changing his actions. Rogers in his conversation with Martin Buber describes in terms of a therapeutic relationship what I am suggesting can be the basis of a relationship with the self:

> . . . acceptance of this person as he is, is the strongest factor making for change that I know. In other words, I think that does release change or release potentiality to find that as I am, I am fully accepted—then I can't help but change. Because then I feel there is no longer any need for defensive barriers, so then what takes over are the forward moving processes of life itself . . . (Buber 182)

It feels comfortable to Huck to think about being saved, being found, being accepted, being home. He can for the moment indulge in the self-love made possible by fragmentation:

> I felt good and all washed clean of sin for the first time I had ever felt so in my life, and I knowed I could pray, now. But I didn't do it straight off, but laid the paper down and set there thinking; thinking how good it was all this happened so, and how near I come to being lost and going to hell. (269)

He lets himself relax. Perhaps, this comfort reminds him of the comfort he experienced on the raft. In any case, his thoughts, which made a wrong turn toward St. Petersburg when he was desperate, now, in comfort and confidence, make a U-turn to the image of Jim. Jim's name reappears, he is no longer "a poor old woman's nigger"; now he is present as a human being: "and I see Jim before me. . ."(270). Jim's voice also reappears: after a series of images of how Jim has loved him (not, significantly, how he has loved Jim), Huck hears Jim calling him his best friend, which is also significantly the time that Jim called him a gentleman. His temporary surrender to fragmentation is not sustained from within. Huck is not threatened by looking directly at both sources of inner comfort, the family of St. Petersburg and the family he has with Jim.

Huck felt good when he thought he was washed pure of sin, but he also feels good when he thinks about being loved by Jim. The two voices that Huck hears are the voice of authoritarian conscience (St. Petersburg) and the voice of unconditional love (Jim). Authoritarian conscience requires him to not be the boy he was, whereas unconditional love requires nothing of him other than that he become whatever he might become. The possibility that Jim's love was actually not unconditional, that Jim may, in fact, have called Huck "gentleman" as "a cunning piece of seductive praise" (Schmitz 133) does not affect what Huck imagines as he makes his decision. The two things he has to decide between are either not being who he is or becoming what, in Martin Buber's phrase, he has been "meant to become" (182). Huck calls what he was "meant to become" "wickedness" and says it "was in my line, being brought up to it" (271), but what he means by this is continuing to be the kind of a boy he is, that is, being himself.

Huck decides that he will probably "go to hell" if entry into heaven is controlled by St. Peter[sburg], but he chooses condemnation by that culture rather than give up who he is. Huck's ability to make this decision depends on remembering someone else's love for him, but he could not have accepted or trusted in this love (from Jim) if he had had to deal with any deeply hidden self-hate. (As a reader, I do not trust Jim's love nearly as easily as Huck does.) Huck decides not to "reform," not to reshape himself in the image of Becker's normal man, a man who "dares not stand up for his own meanings because this means too much danger, too much exposure," a man who believes it is always "better not to be one-self" (79). Huck makes the life-threatening and life-giving decision to be "the kind of boy" he is.

When Huck says, "I was a trembling, because I'd got to decide, forever, betwixt two things, and I knowed it" (270). He is not deciding whether or not to help Jim; he is deciding whether or not to change from the kind of a boy he is to something "better." We look on his rejection of a "better" personality as a triumph, but it could just as easily be thought of as a providential failure. He decides that he can't even "try to quit being the kind of boy I was." He fails in this effort to change, I would say, because he doesn't have a deep source of self-hatred available to him to support the project. He fails because he doesn't have what it takes to sustain self-alienation.

Once he has made this decision not to "reform" himself, he makes the corollary decision "for a starter" to "steal Jim out of slavery again" (271). His primary decision did not necessarily entail this.

If Huck's crucial decision is embrace authenticity, then, it is not surprising that Huck reverts to his customary relation to Tom during the evasion section. Huck has not decided to be better, but only to be who he is. Part of who he is is an admirer of Tom. His relationship to Tom's fantasy is the same as it was in the first few chapters; he is skeptical but willing to go along most of the time. That his relationship to Jim can be so different from what it was on the raft is also not surprising. We may be disappointed that Huck does not "stand up for his own meanings" and refuse to treat his friend, Jim, as a source of entertainment for Tom, but, of course, Huck does not know that Jim is already free and is willing to have Tom's help even if it means doing things differently from the way he would have done them.

Huck is no saint; he has, however, the potential for change, and therefore growth, that most of the other characters in the book do not have. Tom overlays reality with a fantasy which can be controlled, predicted, and remain fixed even when the reality underlying it exists in constant process. Since Tom looks primarily at his own created illusion, experience does not correct his perception; he insulates himself from the corrective power of real life. In much the same way other characters in the book shape reality to satisfy their needs and desires, but unlike Tom and his fantasies, they are unaware that they have made a substitution. The reality which they have hidden is not only unspeakable but unthinkable; it is the repressed fear that they are not totally praiseworthy, that their psyches house human attributes that their consciousnesses hate. Before such attributes can be changed, the fears must be named; before such fears can be named, they must be thought; and before an individual can face thinking, naming, or changing, he must accept himself for "the kind of boy he is." Self-acceptance does not necessarily lead to positive change, but positive change is possible only within a context of self-acceptance.

The evasion chapters may seem to bring into doubt Huck's ability to ever make significant changes in his way of being in the world, but Huck demonstrates that unlike so many of the other people in this world, he can both learn and change. Huck learns and changes in Chapter 15. After he apologizes to Jim for tricking him into thinking the fog was just a dream, he says, "I didn't do him no more mean tricks, and wouldn't done that one if I'd a knowed it would make him feel that way" (105). He learns that Jim gets hurt from mean tricks; he doesn't necessarily understand all that this implies; he doesn't necessarily revise his whole theory about the place of slaves in Mississippi Valley culture. But he has learned one small thing, and he does change. He played a trick on Jim before this one (the snakeskin trick), and it seems reasonable to assume that he would continue playing tricks on Jim if the reality of Jim's feelings had not corrected his perception at this point. This is a small change in Huck's perception and behavior, but it is both positive and permanent. He doesn't play any more tricks on Jim.

He does, however, continue to mistreat Jim. Long before his participation with Tom in the mistreatment of Jim at Phelps's, he abuses Jim in other ways. When Huck pays no attention to the fact that Jim has missed his chance for freedom and continues downstream without thinking of Jim's future, he is mistreating Jim by ignoring him. In Chapter 31 as he approaches the now-vacant raft, he yells out "Set her loose, Jim, we're all right, now!" (266) although Jim, at this time, would be far from "all right" even if he had not been resold by the King. Jim is at risk of his liberty and his life every time he comes in contact with a white person. But Huck does not clearly see Jim's situation.

The "exhilarating power of Huck's instinctive humanity" which Leo Marx (28) reads in the word "us" (Git up and hump yourself, Jim! . . . There ain't a minute to lose. They're after us!") (75) might also be read in the "we" of "We're all right, now." But Huck's humanity only goes as far as connecting Jim's destiny to his own, it does not extend to Huck seeing Jim's destiny as different from his, the destiny of a separate person with different desires and dramatically different possibilities. Huck's instinctive humanity not only moves him to identify with Jim's flight, but to lose track of Jim's danger.

Huckleberry Finn can be read as the story of Huck's developing relationship with himself. This relationship is not a model of a completed personality, but is a model of the precondition for growth and change. A focus on this aspect of the book, if it does not eliminate the problems of teaching the book, at least changes them. Instead of looking at the rightness or wrongness of Huck's actions, students can be asked to look at how Huck's way of making decisions differs from that of other characters or from the way of making decisions the students observe in their friends and themselves. By recognizing how seldom Huck's decisions are "overdetermined," students can become aware of what part overdetermination and self-alienation might play in decisions that they make. Distinguishing healthy guilt and shame from overdetermined responses, provides students with a powerful tool for consideration of all manner of brutality and dehumanization (including sentimentality). All of this places the book that Julius Lester called "immoral in its major premises, one of which demeans blacks and insults history"(43) in a context of critical consciousness and moral inquiry. Paulo Freire teaches us that "To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming" (76). Rather than naming the world for us, the book can provide a text with which we can begin naming the world for ourselves.

Bill Martin

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The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn as a Warning to Society

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is a book which can be read on many different levels. It is, to many readers, simply a charming story detailing the adventures of an adolescent boy. However, to the serious reader of literature, this novel can be read as a scathing indictment of the morality of American society. In a sense, Twain is forcing his readers to view various examples of bad citizenship, underscoring the fact that this immoral citizenship is the norm, it is the accepted way of society. It becomes an ethical problem. Why do we foster and nurture poor civilizations? When we honestly know better, why do we allow something that is bad to continue to exist and to determine our behavior? Our journey down the Mississippi River with Huck and Jim and their subsequent encounters with society provides a microcosm by which we can view various societal evils that Twain wishes us, as readers, to consider. Is Huck justified when he decides to, ". . .light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me and I can't stand it. I been there before." (362)? This essay attempts to determine the factors on which Huck based this decision.

Huck Finn would scarcely be acknowledged by society at large as the type of person to bring to light the many social ills Twain is intent on showing to his readers. For that very reason Huck's discoveries about society are all the more powerfully stated. Huck, as we know from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, has largely lived his life on the outside of polite society. His mother is dead, and his brutal father is the town drunk. Huck lives where he wants, which is usually in a hogshead, and does exactly what he wants. He has never been forced to go to school and is uneducated. He is placed in the position of having to meet his own basic needs as best he can. This is a situation about which the entire town is aware and yet nothing is done to aid Huck. It is not until Huck and Tom find six thousand dollars apiece that the townspeople take any real interest in him. It is almost as if until he has money, something which society values, he is of no worth. Once he has gained this accepted social value, he is worthy of being trained to function as a member of society. What does this say about a society that holds in such low regard those less fortunate human beings? Is not all of mankind worthy of having their basic needs met so that they can become productive members of society? Is it only one's monetary value that grants one acceptance into society? Certainly Huck is counted unacceptable until he is worth six thousand dollars. Huck's money is invested by Judge Thatcher, and the Widow Douglas takes Huck home to begin the task of civilizing him.

While Huck is living under the Widow Douglas' roof, Twain is able to point out several other societal fallacies. One of the most humorous occurs when Huck is learning what is and is not acceptable behavior in society. The Widow will not let Huck smoke when he wants, and she says that it is a "mean practice and wasn't clean" (3). Dipping snuff, on the other hand, was an entirely different matter; "that was all right, because she done it herself" (3). Another fallacy that Twain points out deals with religion. The Widow Douglas would instruct Huck about religion in a way that would "make a boy's mouth water," and then her sister, Miss Watson, when talking about the same religion, "would take hold and knock it all down again" (14). The widow's view of religion is one with humanist leanings, slightly tolerant of man's shortcomings, while Miss Watson's concept of religion is legalistic and very restrictive. It is interesting to note that Miss Watson is the owner of the slave, Jim, who eventually serves as the major reason that Huck decides to turn his back on society. What kind of society approves of a religion which approves the enforced enslavement of other human beings?

One of the most damning accusations that Twain makes against society occurs in the scenes when Huck's father kidnaps him from the Widow's house. Huck's father, like the rest of society, was mostly interested in Huck because of the six thousand dollars. When Huck realized that his father was back in town, he had the foresight to give the money to Judge Thatcher. Huck's father takes him off to a remote cabin in the woods. Here he treats Huck abusively, continually railing at him for trying to better himself in the eyes of society by learning how to read, to dress and act correctly, and to understand about religion. It is odd to note that while everyone in town knows that Huck's father will be extremely physically abusive to him, the new judge refuses to allow the Widow or Judge Thatcher to assume legal custody of Huck. It is this same new judge who takes in Pap Finn, when he was released from jail for being drunk, to reform his evil, drunken ways. Of course Pap runs straight off and gets drunk again and heads back to the cabin without any member of society stepping in to act on behalf of Huck's welfare. There is something very wrong with a society that condones child abuse. It is an issue that has not lessened with the passage of time since this novel's initial publication, but one that has grown in epidemic proportions. It is also worthy to note that this same society is not moved to action in Huck's behalf until they believe he has been murdered. The entire town turns out to hunt for Huck's body; no more than two people had made more than a cursory attempt to rescue Huck from his abusive father.

It is at this point in the novel that Huck first turns his back on society. He makes no effort to let the townspeople know that he is alive. He opts instead for the unsocialized, uncivilized island. Here he is free from society and its poorly placed values. He thoroughly enjoys himself. It is not until he stumbles across the campfire and is made aware of the presence of another person that he realizes that he is lonely. Huck is made aware of the fact that as human beings, people are basically social creatures and need each other. The campfire belongs to Jim, a slave who has run away from Miss Watson because she had threatened to sell him down south. Huck struggles with the ethics of maintaining a companionship with runaway slave. He instinctively knows he should turn Jim in, but he goes against the dictates of society. He declares, "I ain't agoing to tell, and I ain't agoing back there anyways" (53). Huck thinks society will have different values in other places. Huck and Jim decide to head out for a free state together. Along their way Twain sets up a series of random encounters designed to show more social problems.

Huck and Jim's first major encounter with society after running away occurs when they discover the wreck of the *Walter Scott*. Here Huck finds a group of murderers and Huck demonstrates a definitive appreciation for the value of human life when he tricks a watchman into attempting to save them, knowing that the wreck from which he has just escaped will soon sink. Huck sets himself apart from society when he remarks that he felt good for having gone to the trouble of arranging the rescue because, "not many would a done it" (91). This is one of Twain's many examples of Huck's concern for mankind. Shortly after this Huck encounters more of society's flagrant disregard for the value of human life. Huck comes into contact with the Grangerford family, wealthy landowners who offer him shelter, who are embroiled in a senseless feud with the Shepherdsons, other members of the local 'aristocracy.' Huck is impressed with the Grangerfords' manners and lifestyle. He does not, however, understand what a feud is; and when Buck Grangerford attempts to explain, Huck is only further confused when he realizes that no one in the family knows why they are supposed to hate each other enough to kill each other. This particular episode ends with Huck's witnessing the needless slaughter of people on both sides of the feud. Huck does not understand why well-educated people would hold each other in such low regard. He is so repulsed by what he sees that he does not even describe it; all he says is that, "It made me so sick I almost fell out of the tree"

(153). Huck also experiences man's basic disregard for the welfare of his own kind in numerous other experiences.

This lack of regard for mankind appears to be one of Twain's major indictments of society. He seems to be asking how a society can call itself civilized when it does not value the worth of its own citizens. Huck encounters this lack of basic humanitarian regard again in the form of the fraudulent Duke and King. At this point in the novel, Huck has begun to devise his own code of conduct regarding how people in a society should treat each other. Huck's basic belief is that, "what you want, above all things . . . is for everybody to be satisfied, and feel right and kind towards the others" (165). He finds the Duke and the King lacking in their treatment of other people. He is a witness to several attempts by this pair of scoundrels to dupe their fellow man. Huck watches as they "con" people out of money for a less than well-received Shakespearean presentation, which they quickly transform into a show where ladies and children will not be admitted. In this Twain seems to be making comment on the baseness of society's preferences. Huck is also a witness to the Duke and King's attempt to cheat the Wilks girls out of their rightful inheritance. In this case, Huck's own ethics will not allow him to be a party to this chicanery, and he successfully foils the plot of the Duke and King.

Throughout Huck's voyage down the river he has been forced to grapple with various ethical issues. The most pervasive issue he struggles with is that of slavery and of his own part in Jim's flight from bondage. The concept of society's acceptance of slavery seems to be the most damning of all Twain's indictments of society. Huck knows that society accepts slavery and considers slaves as property, as lesser beings incapable of having deep feelings and of developing value system by which to live. Huck gradually learns to respect Jim as a fellow human being during their time spent on Jackson Island and their subsequent adventures down the Mississippi River. He learns that Jim is loyal and unselfish, that he is capable of deeply loving his own family, and that he exudes an innate goodness. When the Duke and King sell Jim back into slavery, Huck is forced to face the fact that he does not want to belong to a society that allows the enslavement of people like Jim. He knows that society will damn him for his decision, but he determines that he is willing to "go to hell" for Jim (271).

Huck immediately makes plans to find and rescue Jim. He learns that Jim is at the Phelps plantation and rushes to his rescue. Unfortunately, here Huck is reunited with Tom Sawyer, who insists on helping Huck steal Jim out of slavery. Ironically Tom knows that Jim is already a free man, that he was set free two months ago by Miss

Watson's will. Tom does not share this bit of information with Huck, who is astounded that such a citizen as Tom would aid him in going against the laws of society and becoming a "nigger stealer." Tom devised an elaborate plan for effecting Jim's escape. This includes a complete degradation of Jim's personhood. It is almost sickening to watch Huck stoop to play a role in Jim's subsequent sufferings. However, Huck goes along with Tom's plan because Tom has always stood high in his estimation of society. It is not until Tom's plan has backfired and he has been shot during Jim's escape that Huck is able to move back into the forefront and use his own common sense to get them out of trouble. Huck discovers that Tom knew Jim was free all along and that he put Jim through hell just to have an adventure. Huck finally realizes why Tom would help him steal Jim out of slavery. Tom had never knowingly gone against the dictates of society after all.

Shortly after this revelation, it is of no surprise to the reader that Huck chooses "to light out for the Territory" because Aunt Sally has offered to adopt and civilize him. Few of Huck's experiences have shown him any redeeming qualities offered when one becomes 'civilized.' Twain has made a valid statement about the condition of his current surrounding society and seemingly come to the conclusion that anyone who is concerned about his fellow man would come to the same conclusion as Huck and be led to reject society. Society as presented in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is not civilized. It is a place where, "Human beings can be awful cruel to one another" (290). In this novel, Twain has shown his readers a society destined to be damned by its own conventions. Society was, in part, existing in ruts which were unexamined—merely accepted. Slavery had been accepted for years, money had always meant acceptance; the poor and homeless were ignored or outcasts. Such ethical themes reverberate in the messages of the Old Testament prophets as well as in those of Jesus of Nazareth. Twain challenged his readers to recognize their shortcomings and to change them because the best way for a society to exist " ... is for everybody to be satisfied, and feel right and kind towards the others" (165).

Lynn Cresson

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Huck Finn—Naive Observer

In his novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain depicts the society of the South with its immorality, violence, and cruelty. Huck and Jim travel down the river deeper and deeper into a depraved world founded on the disreputable "peculiar institution" of slavery. This inhumanity undermines the society and infiltrates its consciousness as it bankrupts and distorts the morality of the community. The drama of the shore and river create the stage for Huck's experiences in relation to various characters in the Southern society. Huck's voice in the form of colloquial soliloquies presents thoughts, feelings, and descriptions that reveal the dichotomy of individual morality and social conscience through the innocence of childhood. He tells us "how a body can see and don't see at the same time" (291). Huck sees the corrupt, decaying town of Bricksville and reveals, through vivid imagery, a violent, mean town. The immoral society reveals itself in the innocence of Huck and his description of the shore town inhabitants and their cruel codes of conduct .

As young Huck wanders into the dried-up, trash-strewn town of Bricksville, the moral bankruptcy of the town is evident in the metaphoric language of this tired, sluggish town near the river. Huck says the town is a collection of "old shackly dried-up frame concerns that hadn't ever been painted; they was set up three or four feet above ground on stilts, so as to be out of reach of the water when the river was overflowed" (181). The gardens grow only "jimpson weeds, and sunflowers, and ash piles, and old curled-up boots and shoes, and pieces of bottles, and rags, and played-out tinware" (181). In this garden of waste, the weeds are evil-smelling, very poisonous plants, while the trash and litter of society accumulate in piles. No growth or renewal in this town from the alluvial river; only the dead trash of a society which no longer sustains a spirit of life and abundance.

Huck observes a town in which "The fences was made of different kinds of boards, nailed on at different times, and leaned every which way, and had gates that didn't generly have but one hinge—a leather one" (181). The town's inhabitants are disorderly, unkempt and lack a sense of self-respect. The loafers "used considerable many cuss-words" (181). Clearly, Huck cites a metaphor for a poverty of spirit as well as of language. Huck reports the townspeople's cruel pastime of "putting turpentine on a stray dog and setting fire to him or tying a tin pan to his tail and seeing him run himself to death" (183). These loafers lie and steal from each other. Huck, with the insight of an adult, recognizes their mean selfishness and laziness. Huck remarks about the hogs in the gardens and the mud-filled roads of the town. These roads of mud trap the inhabitants in the cruelties that are continued daily in the streets of Bricksville. The very name seems to represent villagers formed from the dull mud of boredom. These men have no visible means of supporting themselves. In this society, slave labor distorts the town economy. These shiftless, lazy, bored loafers "laugh at the fun and look grateful for the noise" (183) that the dogs deliver when they are "sicked" on the nursing sow in the muddy streets. These people are morally as well as economically poor. Their "fun" comes from cruelty and indolence.

Huck continues his description of the town's characters with the Colonel Sherburn-Boggs conflict. Into the midst of the bored emptiness of this town, Old Boggs, the town braggart, rides his horse, directing his monthly drunken tirade at Colonel Sherburn. At first, Huck panics with Boggs's call to kill Sherburn, especially after his encounter with the Shepherdsons and Grangerfords. He is quickly calmed by the townsfolk who explain that Boggs "don't mean nothing; he's always a carryin' on like that, when he's drunk. He's the best-naturedest old fool in Arkansaw—never hurt nobody, drunk nor sober" (184). Boggs continues to threaten Sherburn while the townspeople laugh and yell and hoot, all in the name of "fun." Colonel Sherburn, though, by his description a member of the upper class, comes into the street as the crowd parts. With no sign of emotion, Sherburn threatens Boggs, declaring that he will not tolerate him anymore. Huck observes that the town knows Sherburn means what he says as they try to remove Boggs from the conflict. Eventually, Boggs staggers across the street with the help of two men. While Boggs pleads "don't shoot" (186), Sherburn deliberately and coolly destroys him with two shoots. Sherburn drops his pistol in the dirt and turns on his heel and walks off. This detached, unfeeling cruelty and disregard for a man who was known in the town for his drunken, crazy behavior, confuses Huck. By the title and appearance of Colonel Sherburn, Huck acknowledges the superiority of his station in the town. Yet, his moral character is no better, even worse than the townspeople who are spiritually impoverished and displaced because of the ignominy of slavery.

The townspeople, brutalized by this poisonous society, are not horrified by this pointless and grotesque death of Boggs. The murder excites and draws many lookers and gawkers at the scene of the tragedy. Their poverty of spirit reveals itself in this sideshow of mocking grief, as some detached piece of tragedy performed by the likes of the Duke and Dauphin, a poor imitation of drama as cruel entertainment and not edification. This society disregards the feelings of others and itself; it insulates its feelings with selfishness, indolence, and cruelty. Yet, some of these same citizens "swarmed-up in front of Sherburn's palings" (189) in anger at the cold-blooded murder of Boggs or perhaps, revenge minded. They sing out "Tear down the fence! (189). However, Sherburn understands his position of power and most notably, he understands the cowardly mob. He lashes them with a cruel but true description of their cowardly deeds. In the Southern tradition, these are people who do their dirty deeds in the dark of night. Sherburn takes his stand with a double-barrel shotgun that reminds the mob who is in control and by what power. Sherburn scans the crowd with a penetrating eye that undermines a violence; there is no courage here. He harangues them for their cowardice and admonishes Buck Harkness—as his name implies, a listener not a doer. As leader of this mob Harkness is impotent, powerless before the seemingly powerful Sherburn. He berates these morally empty and despicable people "to droop your tails and go home and crawl in a hole" (191). This imagery reiterates the contempt for the rootless, vile, animal nature of this society which cruel, violent, authoritarian whim controls. The southern aristocracy, based on the institution of slavery, perpetuates this cruel and inhuman society.

Huck, after this brutal encounter with the mob and Sherburn's power, immediately retreats to the circus, a world of fun and fancy. He "could a staid, if I'd a wanted to, but I didn't want to" (191). The juxtaposition of these two scenes in the same chapter reveals the continued innocence of Huck following the incredible violence of Bricksville. In the circus scene, naive Huck experiences the world of illusion, not the harsh reality of the shore town. The performance by the circus actors presents a parallel to Huck's experiences in this town. Huck, in his descriptions and comments, reveals his innocence with the appearances of the world. In his interpretation of the "drunk's" performance in the circus ring, Huck at first becomes frightened by the actions of the circus performer. Huck does not find his demeanor funny and is "all a tremble to see" the crazy "drunk" cavorting in the ring. Huck is then captivated by the "drunk's" attire as he sheds his suits to ride the horse. The performance of the circus performer, with his many suits and his drunken behavior, contrasts with Sherburn and his appearance in the reality of the murder. Huck has difficulty assessing what is real in both of these scenes. Huck leaves the mob scene because he can make no sense of the cruelty. He wrongly assumes that the ringmaster is as unaware of the circus performer's antics as he is. He comments about the embarrassment the ringmaster must have suffered from the "joke." Huck struggles with reality.

His naive misunderstanding of the circus "drunk" suggests a credible youth who "couldn't no way understand" (192). Huck's innocence especially after the horror of the Bricksville street scene suggests that Huck is observer and not yet wise in the ways of society. For the innocent Huck there can be no resolution for this violence, not yet. As a naive child of the river, he will continue to think and react as a child until his "adult" decision to find Jim and escape with him to freedom. Psychologically, at this point in the story, he is unable to fully understand the brutality of slavery and its degradation of the human spirit. He observes and reports what his heart and senses allow. No logic, reason, or understanding can account for this evil society to the innocent Huck. Not until later will he allow his heart to determine his sin in freeing Jim. But now, he cannot see through the violence and horror of this perverted society that fosters and emboldens its members to violence. These Bricksville townspeople have witnessed a brutal cold—blooded murder of the "best-naturedest old fool" by a representative of the aristocratic South. No one has the courage to counter the tyranny of this ignoble colonel in the community. The imagery of the decaying, mud-filled, hog and trash-strewn streets with its shiftless, bored, cruel townspeople depicts the moral decay of a civilization based on slavery. This society of the South is no flower but a weed-filled garden of decay, tended by the angry, the bored, and the cruel.

Victoria Heckendorn

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The Much Abbreviated Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: From the McGarry/Spengemann File

Setting: On the Mississippi in the raft, sometime after Chapter IX.

"But Jim, let's face the point. You ain't really nothin' but a runaway nigger."

"Don' p'int me no p'ints, Huck. Leas' ah ain' duh son o' no dead fish-belly white man!"

"Dead! You mean dead drunk, dontcha Jim?"

"Blame if ah do! He dead! Like a toad in duh road! Dog mah cats if he ain'! You ain' seed nuffin' deadah dan dat unduhside white man. He so dead he small like duh ca'f dat been dead fo' days in duh cow belly. Das how dead he i'!"

"And you didn't tell me, goddammit! You goddam nigger. Goddammit y'all're all alike!"

"How ah gwynna te' you? You answah me dat! If ah done tol' yah, you'dah run back home n' took yo' money n' lef' po' ol' Jim a lone run-off niggah in duh middle o' duh Miss'ippi slabe country! Why sho ahm gwynna te' you. Ahm gwynna te' you ah got AIDS, leprosy, hepatitis, n' contagious impotence! Cain' you pull yo' head outn yo' ass long enough tah see dat? Don' talk tah me!"

"So what'd you think we were gonna do? Raft to fuckin' Jamaica? You done missed Cairo—the one chancet you had, you chuckle-head nigger! So then you decide you'd just not let on that Pap's dead so I'll keep runnin' with you and you won't get yer neck stretched. What makes you think I won't do it now?"

"Huck, honey. Don' go talkin' like dat. You know ol' Jim been good to yah n' allus gwynna be. I jus' thought it mighta broke yo' haht tah heah dat nuze n' ah couldna stood it. I thought we'za team n' on a adventchuh, like Tom would do. Come heah. Ahm sorry. Lemme rub yo' neck."

"Jim! Jim! Yer chokin' me. Jim! Agh. Agh.

"Shutup, you smahtass white boy! Ah done lissen tah you n' Sollerman n' dah king n' dah Duke n' all dat white ass bullshit long enough."

"Kugghhh. Kaaagh."

"I say shut dah fuck up. Ahma strangah yo' skinny-neck white ass n' den drown ya n' mebbe dat'll shutcha up, n' den ahm gwynna take yah back slow n' solemn-like tah St. Petahbug n' say ah chase down dah white fo'k dat gotcha but too late tah save yah but ah broughtcha back anyway n' do mah po' dumb humble niggah routine. den dah wors' is ah be back safe in captivity fo' awhi' n' dah bes' is day pay me o' set me free! You got inny questions, you Miss'ippi soggy-ass white crackuh?"

"Keeegh. Cawgh."

"Whah's dat? Ah don' know dat language. Could dat be French? O' is you talkin' cow? Nah, you's jus' talkin' white. You mus' be talkin' white. Mebbe dat's whah ah cain' heah yah too good."

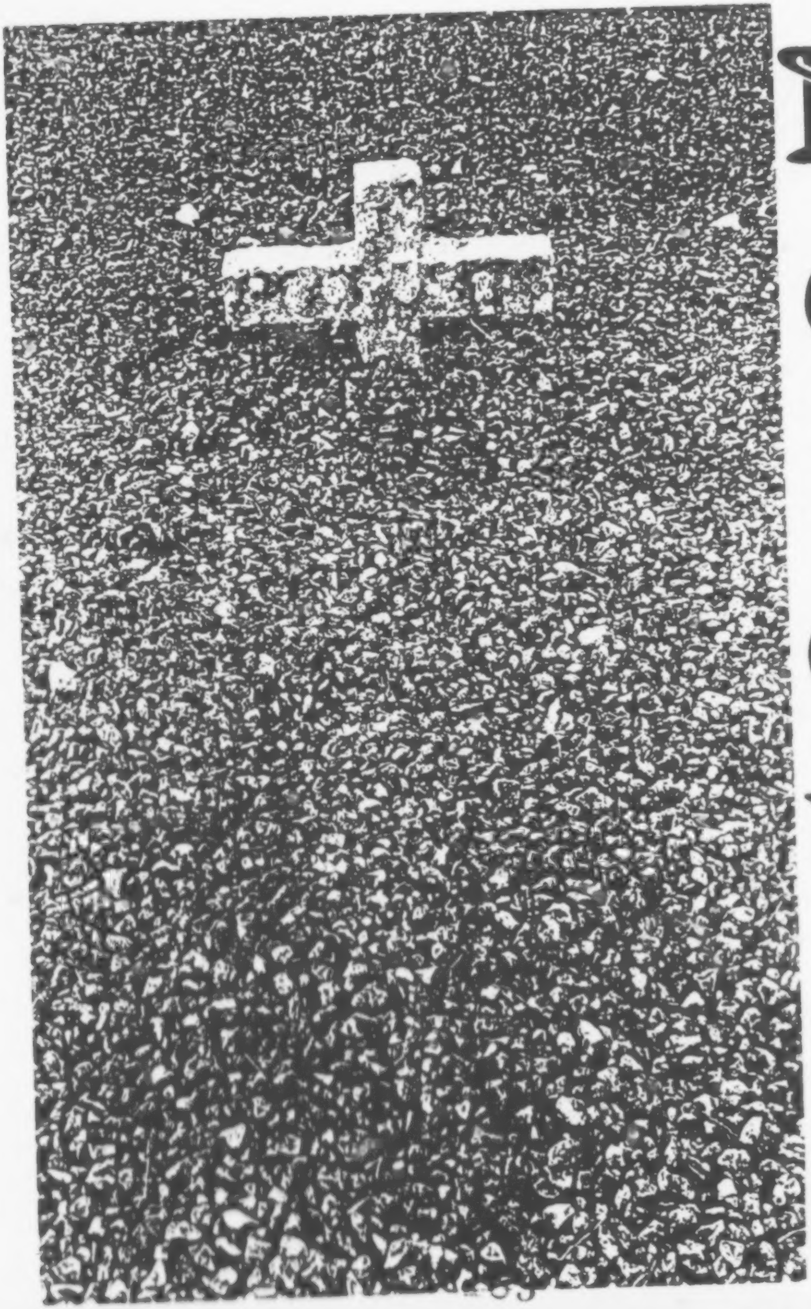
"Hahgh."

"Really? Sho 'nough? Nobody killed? Jus' a niggah? Dat's sholy uh relief tah mah min'. Cain' have no loose live niggahs hangin' roun'. Dey might think o' feel o' sumpm. You know how dat go! Den not jus' you but dah who' neighbahhood go tah hell. You dead yet? Yeah you dead. Les' pole on back up da ribbah heah, see ken we fin' a steamboat we ken hitch to. Lawd, ah like yo' comp'ny bettah already. Lissen whi' yah jus' settin' deah, why doan' ah sing yah a li'l song:

Ah was bawn on a ribbah
In a li'l tent,
n' oh, jus' like dat ribbah,
Ah been runnin' ebbah since.
It's been a long, long time commin',
But ah know a change has gotta come.
Oh, yes it will.
It's been too hahd a libbin',
But ahm afraid tah die.
Ah doan' know wha's up deah
Beyon' dah sky.
It's been a long, long time commin',
But ah know a change has got tah come—
A change has got tah come, yeah.

You like dat song, Huck? I betchou ken heah it a lot bettah now."

Daniel Stevens



Beloved

She Haunts Me

Beloved is my shame. I feel her presence everywhere I go. The first time I heard her mentioned was on a television series called "The Gray Ghost." Beloved did not play a major role, only Mosby's Rangers warring with Yankee soldiers. My second grade teacher told me the show was not accurate. My parents agreed but no one explained. My fifth grade teacher tried. She told me that Beloved killed many black people and caused the Civil War. She told me that the South needed Beloved to harvest its cotton and that most plantation owners treated her well because she was a valuable property. This time my parents disagreed. So did my American History teacher. He said Beloved was raped, beaten, and sold down river, away from her family. He also said that Beloved died after the Civil War. I know that is not true. Beloved went to my high school. She sat at the back of the classroom and ate at a separate table in the cafeteria. She did not serve on the Student Council or participate in the National Honor Society. She did not go to the prom or the Junior/Senior banquet. But she did play basketball. She scored the most points at the Air Force tournament, yet she was not named Most Valuable Player. She was my roommate on the basketball trip, but one motel would not let us stay together. I heard my coach arguing with the management. They said Beloved must room alone. He told us that there were problems with the reservations, so we left the motel. I guess he didn't want Beloved to know the true reason. But she looked at the floor and tears rolled down her cheeks. Beloved attended college with me. We marched in demonstrations and listened to Martin Luther King. And laws changed. Yet Beloved was beaten in East Texas when she rode a bus through Henderson. They said that Beloved died after the civil rights legislation was passed. I know that is not true. She lives on East 12th Street in Austin and works at a dry cleaners. She tells her three children about their father who died of a heart attack five years ago how he worked too hard and waited too long to go to the doctor! They did everything right, but the whitepeople accused them of laziness. Of laziness. And I do nothing. Oh, I vote. But I no longer march. I no longer ride a bus for freedom. I only grumble about Republicans, the Supreme Court, or Jesse Helms. Some say she is really a ghost and is after the whitepeople for not doing anything about the poverty, the abuse. Some say she started the L.A. riots. And she may have. For I know I no longer room with her or walk with her or ride with her. She's my shame, Beloved. She's mine.

Paula Moeller

Beloved and Christian Citizenship: An Augustinian Analysis of Sethe and Stamp Paid

> The community and people of the just, live by faith, which works
> by love, that love whereby man loves God as He ought to be loved,
> and his neighbor as himself . . .
> (St. Augustine 41)

Theologians have debated the correct behavior of Christians within states ever since Jesus Christ made his "render unto Caesar what is Caesar's . . . " comment. Was Christ a political radical? Should Christians obey all laws? Should Christians violently oppose immoral governments?

St. Augustine, a fifth century Catholic bishop, posed the question for Christians in this manner: "How do I apply my faith to the circumstances of life with them [non-believers] in political society?" (quoted in Brookes 50). His answers significantly shaped Christian views on these issues. St. Augustine's conception of the world and his beliefs on Christian citizenship can add a new understanding to the actions of Sethe and Stamp Paid in Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved.*

St. Augustine divides mankind into two types of people: those who seek material pleasure on earth and those who seek the love of God and heavenly peace. He claims that,

> . . . yet there are no more than two kinds of human society, which we may justly call two cities, according to the language of our Scriptures. The one consists of those who wish to live after the flesh, the other of those who wish to live after the spirit. (5-6)

Both "cities" exist in this world in different ways. All people live in the City of Man ("those who wish to live after the flesh"), where desire, selfishness, force, and corruption dominate. Virtue exists, but it is only a civic—not Christian—virtue created by fear and coercion. Justice may also exist in some states, but it is not the true justice of the City of God. The City of Man is temporary, and not of ultimate importance for the Christian.

The City of God, however, is eternal and the ultimate aim of Christian faith and love. Part of the City of God exists on earth inside the few people whose faith leads to correct living. All Christians aspire to attain it after their pilgrimage on earth.

The City of God represents heaven, eternal life, true happiness, and love of God. Only the City of God contains genuine justice and virtue.

What obligations does the Christian have to the state according to Augustine? How should the Christian act in this world? Augustine's vision of Christian citizenship contains three fundamental tenets: obedience to the state, love of God, and love of neighbor (not arranged in order of importance to Augustine).

St. Augustine acknowledges that Christians have a duty not only to obey the state, but also to participate in it. All states, even bad ones, are divinely ordained, and unjust laws are simply a test of virtue for Christians (13). Augustine says "What does it matter under whose government a dying man lives, if they who govern do not force him to impiety and iniquity?" (94). Augustine does not consider the morality of the particular state important in terms of the citizens' obligations to it—good and bad states rise and fall over the course of history. State laws must be obeyed unless they violate God's commandments, such as the prohibition against worshipping other Gods. He states:

> The citizens of the heavenly city will gladly co-operate in promoting earthly peace as long as they live in the land of their pilgrimage. Yet they must challenge the laws of the earthly city whenever these laws infringe on their own supreme loyalty to God. (quoted in Hardy 50)

If laws do in fact violate God's commandments, Augustine believes that only passive civil disobedience was the proper form of protest for the Christian. The Christian must refuse the order and accept quietly whatever punishment follows (Deane 149).

Love of God is another component of St. Augustine's conception of the duties of the Christian citizen. He says "this divine Master inculcates two precepts—the love of God and the love of neighbour . . . " (St. Augustine 147). Faith in God and salvation are closely linked with the doctrine of the love of God. The true Christian loves God, and this faith leads to correct living. St. Augustine quotes Paul's statement that for "we are saved by hope . . . " (133). Paul explains that this is an "unseen hope"—in other words, faith. True virtue is the love of God; pride, its opposite. The Christian attains the city of God not by good works alone, but more importantly by faith.

The edict "Love thy neighbor as thyself . . . " bore much importance for Augustine. He writes, "and this is the order of this concord, that a man, in the first place, injure no one, and in the second, do good to every one he can reach" (147). This love of neighbor takes many forms of including encouraging the neighbor to believe in God and sharing possessions with him. For Augustine, the wealthy Christian is obligated to share with the less fortunate or his legitimate claim to the wealth cease.

St. Augustine's Christian citizen exhibited obedience to the state, love of God, and love of neighbor. If we consider Sethe and Stamp Paid in Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* and examine their rejection of slavery, and St. Augustine's belief that slavery is the result of man's sinfulness, neither character perfectly parallels his conception of the Christian citizen. Both Sethe and Stamp would have had to accept their lot as slaves and become good Christian slaves. However, an analysis of the events which transformed their lives, and their actions in the post-slavery period, reveals sharp differences between them as Christian citizens. Sethe clearly lives in Augustine's City of Man, and Stamp aspires to the City of God.

The defining event in the lives of both Sethe and Stamp Paid was not their attainment of freedom, but rather their responses to an injustice inflicted upon them by their masters. Sethe's life changed forever once the schoolteacher returned to capture Sethe and her children, and Stamp's life was transformed by the rape of his wife. A study of their actions in terms of Augustine's beliefs discloses that these characters are almost diametrically opposed.

For almost one year the son of Stamp's master raped his wife. Stamp did not punish the rapist, which would have meant almost certain death for him, because his wife demanded that Stamp stay alive. Stamp wanted to kill the boy and then even contemplated killing his wife for making him suffer through such mental torture. He refrained from either action, but from then on he believed that his psychological suffering on behalf of his wife cleared all his future debts to society—hence his new name, "Stamp Paid." Joshua, his original name, means Jesus in Hebrew. One wonders if the same master both gave Stamp his Christian name and his wife to his son. Stamp underwent a brief spell of irresponsible living because of his suffering. A narrator relates, "he thought it would make him rambunctious, renegade . . . and in a way it did . . . It didn't seem much of a way to live, and it brought him no satisfaction" (Morrison 185). Stamp decided to help other Blacks. In a real sense, he became a redeemer, giving new life to former slaves.

Stamp exhibited several traits characteristic of Augustine's Christian citizen. First, he obeyed even the unjust state laws and did not seek justice outside of the state by punishing the rapist. Whether he obeyed these laws primarily out of loyalty to the state or to his wife is not critical. The importance is the effect of his choice compared to the effect of Sethe's choice. Second, he exhibited patience. Many years after the event, Stamp said that he had little patience at the time, but clearly he showed patience in the face of injustice. Third, Stamp became a servant to others, and demonstrated his love of neighbor.

Sethe saw the schoolteacher's hat, quickly shooed her children into the woodshed, and violated one of the world's most strongly held taboos. In contrast to Stamp's patience, Sethe reacted instantly, perhaps set into motion by evil spirits ("little hummingbirds stuck their needle beaks right through her headcloth into her hair and beat their wings") (163). Instead of obeying state laws or even social norms, Sethe violated all laws and moral codes except her own. And in place of redemption and service to others, Sethe isolated herself from the community.

Stamp's service to his community is apparent throughout the novel. The reader first meets Stamp sharing food, water, and clothing with Sethe, and helping her cross the river to freedom. His sense of community and caring for his neighbor remain with him. He is a concerned Christian who "never felt a trickle of meanness his whole adult life" (171). His gift of blackberries, picked with no small amount of suffering, starts the huge feast at Baby Suggs'. In a religious and symbolic sense, Stamp's provision of berries multiplied into a feast for the entire community.

Stamp's actions toward Sethe and Paul D. manifest his desire to love his neighbor. He has forgiven Sethe for her actions, which agrees with St. Augustine's edict to love the person who does evil things but not the evil in the person. When Stamp goes to Sethe's house, he is willing to apologize to her for whatever wrong he may have done to her. Stamp is critical of Ella's distance from Paul D. simply because he had a relationship with Sethe. When Stamp discovers that Paul D. is sleeping in the church ("cold as charity") because he didn't ask anyone for a place to stay, he shouts in exasperation: Why he have to ask? Can't nobody offer? . . . I'm going to stay riled till somebody gets some sense and leastway act like a Christian" (186). He later goes to Paul D. and apologizes for the community's lack of charity. He warns Paul D. that there is possibly evil in Sethe, but is unsure of his motivation. "Maybe he was not the high-minded Soldier of Christ he thought he was, but an ordinary, plain meddler . . . (170). However, his reflection and his willingness to visit Sethe shows that he meant no harm to either of them.

In contrast to Stamp's love of neighbor, Sethe exhibits isolation, pride, and self-righteousness, traits characteristic of Augustine's City of Man. The community was outraged at her actions, "and she returned their disapproval with the potent pride of the mistreated" (96). Except for a short gasp after the sheriff arrived, never does

Sethe vocalize doubt about the murder of Beloved. Sethe justifies her actions on the belief that she saved Beloved from a fate worse than death. She—not a God or a state—became the judge and taker of life.

Sethe's conviction that her actions are just and her rejection of the community's values deepen her isolation and increase her pride. Remarkably, Sethe never questions her act of infanticide, nor indicates a desire for forgiveness or understanding by anyone other than Beloved. Her neighbors refuse to enter her house; Sethe refuses to attend Baby Suggs' funeral. Paul D. believes that she is a different person from the Sethe he knew. He reflects, "This here Sethe was new . . . This here Sethe talked about safety with a handsaw. This here new Sethe didn't know where the world stopped and she began" (164). Her pride is evident at work as well, where she steals food so she can avoid standing in line with Blacks at the back of the store. As Beloved takes more control over her life, Sethe reflects "there is no world outside my door" (184).

In contrast to Sethe and her pride, Stamp displays an abiding faith in God. In a sense, this world isn't important for Stamp—he tells Paul D. that a Black has to suffer "all he can" (235). Speaking to Baby Suggs, Stamp says that there "ain't nothing harmless down here," and that "these things too will pass" (179). How does he bear the burdens? "He would rely on the power of Jesus Christ to deal with things older, but not stronger, than He Himself was" (172).

Stamp's anger and frustration at Baby Suggs stems from her abandonment of faith. The endless abuse by whites, culminating in the trespass of her property, broke Baby Suggs. She was the "mountain to Stamp's sky," and he admonished her to preach: "Listen here, girl, you can't quit the Word. It's given to you to speak. You can't quit the Word, I don't care what all happen to you" (177).

Stamp never let go of his faith in God, while Sethe never demonstrated faith in anything but herself. Sethe's self-identification and obsession with Beloved demonstrates her need for immediate gratification, her abandonment of the community, and perhaps even her evil side (the community considers the house haunted). Her world in fact shrinks to her house, as she stops caring for Denver and working. Her isolation from society is complete, and she seeks the temporary pleasure of Beloved's company.

Sethe—isolated, proud, lives in Augustine's City of Man. Stamp Paid—serving others, believing in God, aspires to Augustine's City of God. Although Morrison certainly never consciously contrasted these two characters in terms of the fifth century beliefs of a Catholic bishop, an analysis of them using Augustine's ideas on Christian citizenship reveals a striking division in their love of their neighbor, love of God, and obedience to the state.

Bill Gardiner

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The Right of Dissent: Beloved's Baby Suggs and Sethe

Historically, within societies, groups have been identified and isolated from the main body of citizens, which is here defined as those residing in and receiving rights and privileges from a state. These minorities are often relegated to servile or scapegoat roles. They are the outcasts . . . those who live and function within the society and yet are denied true rights of citizenship. It is the outcasts' ethical role within the society to cause the continuous redefining and expansion of citizenship through the means most readily available to them: dissent. I believe that literature like Toni Morrison's *Beloved* provides an excellent means of understanding this historical phenomenon.

Dissent can take a multitude of forms, but historically there appear to be two major categories, passive and active. Passive dissent involves nonviolent but not necessarily legal actions that highlight the failure of society to provide for the rights of the outcast. Active dissent is frequently illegal, violent and shocking in its disregard for the accepted behaviors of the society. In either case, dissent, to the extent that it moves the society towards a more open definition of citizenship, is ethical even though it may clash with the ethical standards of the majority. In *Beloved* the reader clearly sees the two categories of dissent represented by Baby Suggs and Sethe. Baby Suggs, a representative of passive dissent, is perhaps analogous to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s.

Martin Luther King, Jr.,

> . . . was not only an excellent organizer but also a student of the principles of nonviolent social protest. He had read the philosophy of Henry David Thoreau … who had practiced civil disobedience against laws he believed were unjust. [He] also studied the life of Mohandas K. Gandhi … who … helped bring about India's independence from Britain through nonviolent social protest. Martin Luther King, Jr., had yet another important quality—the ability to inspire people to follow him. (Haskins 14)

King first became prominent as the leader of the Montgomery boycott which called on blacks to carpool and avoid using "the city's bus system, which depended heavily on black patronage" (Divine 853). King's leadership role continued after the victorious boycott as he preached a "philosophy of passive resistance that stressed nonviolence and love" (Divine 853). His goal was to unite the black community under the principles of Christianity.

Similarly, Baby Suggs possesses the same characteristics ascribed to Martin Luther King, Jr. She uses her house, 124, as a way station for the underground railroad. "124 had been a cheerful, buzzing house where Baby Suggs, holy, loved, cautioned, fed, chastised and soothed. Where the lamp burned all night long. Strangers rested there . . . Messages were left there . . . Talk was low and to the point" (Morrison 87). She refuses to accept what she believes to be unjust (slavery) even though it was legal.

In addition to her civil disobedience, Baby Suggs is also an inspiration as the black community follows her to the Clearing.

> It started that way: laughing children, dancing men, crying women and then it got mixed up. Women stopped crying and danced, men sat down and cried; children danced, women laughed, children cried until, exhausted and riven, all and each lay about the Clearing damp and gasping for breath. In the silence that followed, Baby Suggs, holy, offered up to them her great big heart. She did not tell them to clean up their lives or to go and sin no more. She did not tell them they were the blessed of the earth, its inheriting meek or its glorybound pure. She told them that the only grace they could have was the grace they could imagine. That if they could not see it, they would not have it. (88)

Baby Suggs, holy, and her message in the Clearing are in alignment with Dr. King's famous "I have a dream" speech. King's "I have a dream" speech was delivered to a singing, laughing, crying crowd gathered before the Washington Monument. King over and over repeated the phrase "I have a dream", and his dream was one in which he exhorts his audience to "let freedom ring".

> When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of that old Negro spiritual. Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty we are free at last! (Divine 872)

Not only do Baby Suggs and Martin Luther King, Jr. have similar messages and participate in similar acts of passive dissent, they also are initially received similarly by their communities. Both are venerated, and both find some acceptance within the mainstream of society. The Bodwins, as abolitionists, perhaps work with Baby Suggs. Edward Bodwin clearly sees his days of alliance with the protest of the outcasts as the best of times. "Nothing since was as stimulating as the old days of letters, petitions, meetings, debates, recruitment, quarrels, rescue and downright sedition" (Morrison 260). Certainly his donation of the house at 124 and other gifts indicate acceptance. Dr. King's "official" acceptance came slower, but movie stars and singers like Joan Baez marched with him and helped him press President Kennedy for a Civil Rights Bill in the early 1960s. Eventually, the actions of passive dissent seemed moderate albeit still illegal.

Interestingly, both Baby Suggs and Dr. King express doubts about their support from the establishment. Before Baby Suggs takes to her bed to study colors, she has a conversation with Stamp Paid in which he asks her if she believes that the whitefolks won. Her repeated retort is "they came in my yard" (Morrison 179). She takes to her bed saying "Those white things have taken all I had or dreamed, . . . and broke my heartstrings too. There is no bad luck in the world but whitefolks' " (89). Her last words to Sethe and Denver are "that there was no bad luck in the world but whitepeople. 'They don't know when to stop' " (104). Similarly, King in his "Letter From the Birmingham Jail" confessed to "have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate . . . [S]hallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will" (Haskins 28). King was, for his own reasons, as disillusioned as Baby Suggs.

One final similarity exists between the life and actions of the fictional character Baby Suggs, holy, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Both are criticized and both yield their passive dissent to a more active form. King's "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" is written in response to some of this criticism.

Concerning criticism of King, Taylor Branch in *Parting The Waters* suggests that jealousy on the part of more conservative blacks (representing groups like the NAACP) and the frustrations of black youths (led by Stokely Carmichael, Eldridge Cleaver and others) led to splits in the civil rights movement. At the time of his death, King was struggling to maintain his role of leadership. The conservative blacks resented his attempts to court more radical groups, and those groups were convinced that his nonviolent message was too slow and passive to evoke change.

Similar resentment exists towards 124. Baby Suggs discovers that within her community there is also disapproval that manifests itself after the party to welcome the more "radical" Sethe.

> Ninety people who ate so well and laughed so much, it made them angry ... Too much, they thought. Where does she get it all, Baby Suggs, holy? Why is she and hers always the center of things? How come she always knows exactly what to do and when? Giving advice; passing messages; healing the sick, hiding fugitives, loving, cooking, cooking, loving, preaching, singing, dancing and loving everybody like it was her job and hers alone . . . It made them furious. They swallowed baking soda, the morning after, to calm the stomach violence caused by the bounty, the reckless generosity on display at 124. Whispered to each other in the yards about fat rats, doom and uncalled-for pride. The scent of their disapproval lay heavy in the air. (Morrison 136-137)

In the end, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination left room for more active dissent to gain control of the civil rights movement. And the scent of disapproval over Baby Suggs' pride hides the danger until it is too late. Sethe's "activism" relegates Baby Suggs to her bed to contemplate colors until her death. Active dissent with its radical edge is represented in *Beloved* by Sethe. Sethe is not analogous to one historical character but is representative of a state of mind that has existed in the black community of the United States since the mid 1960s.

By the 1960s, "The Civil Rights Movement had gained important rights for black people . . . But these gains had been won at great cost, not only in terms of lost lives but of lost hope that whites would ever really accept blacks as equals" (Haskins 105). Similar realizations brought into focus by Schoolteacher's measurements and lists propelled Sethe to separate from Sweet Home. Thus the nonviolent passive dissent that controlled the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s was replaced by a rising black activism and militancy that emphasized black separation rather than integration.

The Black Power movement lost faith in the system as it existed, because laws like the 1964 Civil Rights Bill failed to eradicate racism. In 1966, Stokely Carmichael, who coined the term "Black Power," led a militant coup of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee "and wasted little time thereafter in declaring a new militant policy" (108). He saw passive dissent as weak and integration as demeaning. Because integration required blacks to move to white neighborhoods and go to white schools, Carmichael believed it "reinforces among both black and white, the idea that 'white' is automatically better and 'black' is by definition inferior" (111). Carmichael wanted blacks to aggressively defend themselves and to gain control and pride within the black community—Black Separatism.

An outgrowth of the Black Separatist movement was the formation of the Black Panther Party, in 1966. The Black Panthers proposed that all blacks arm themselves, ostensibly for defense. They believed "that Political Power comes through the Barrel of a Gun" (Divine 900). Many blacks were attracted to "the idea of proud, unafraid black people [who] directly challenged white authorities" (Haskins 130).

Sethe's flight can be seen as an active defense of her family and a direct challenge to the white authorities. Her pride is evident when she describes her feelings about the escape to Paul D.

> I did it. I got us all out. Without Halle too. Up till then it was the only thing I ever did on my own. Decided. And it came off right, like it was supposed to. We was here. Each and every one of my babies and me too. I birthed them and I got em out and it wasn't no accident. I did that. I had help, of course, lots of that, but still it was me doing it; me saying *Go on*, and *Now*. Me having to look out. Me using my own head. But it was more than that. It was a kind of selfishness I never knew nothing about before. It felt good. Good and right. (Morrison 162)

Black Separatists could identify with Sethe's words and be proud of her. Sethe achieves an independence and self-imposed separation that parallels the goals of the Black Power Movement. "Paul D convinced me there was a world out there and that I could live in it. Should have known better. *Did* know better. Whatever is going on outside my door ain't for me. The world is in this room. This here's all there is and all there needs to be" (182-183).

Physical separation was only one aspect of Black Separatism. The Black Panthers further advocated punishment of the white community through economic separation that would improve the economic status of blacks while hurting the economic status of the white community. They formed stores and schools that were owned by blacks to serve blacks.

Sethe could understand this concept as she is aware that she can love her children in Ohio because now they are hers. Sethe's feelings are just one more example of the psychological impact of Black Pride. However, the real frustration and rage of the black community over the injustices of the system does not always seek organized outlets.

History provides many examples of spontaneous, reactive dissent. The 1965 Watts riot was "a massive outburst of rage and destruction . . . [in which] inhabitants burned buildings and looted stores" (Divine 900). The summer of 1967 was also marked by violence in Newark and Detroit, "where . . . mobs attacked the shops and stores, expressing a burning grievance against a consumer society from which they were excluded by their poverty" (900). 125 cities experienced riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968. "The worst rioting took place in Washington, D.C., where buildings were set on fire within a few blocks of the White House" (901).

These riots can be compared to a form of suicide on a mass scale. Suicide is acknowledged as resulting from depression and a sense of hopelessness on the part of the individual. It is the individual's frustration with life's inadequacies that cause a person to turn his/her anger inward leading "to aggression against the self" (Rathus 551). Likewise, the destruction of their own communities by blacks demonstrates the impotent rage they feel towards the white majority. The book, *Black Rage* by William H. Grier and Price M. Cobbs, two black psychiatrists, refers to "the waves of hopelessness that engulfed black men and women when Martin Luther King was murdered. All black people understood the tide of anarchy that followed his death" (210). I view this as a group example of the principle that "depression and grief are hatred turned on the self" (208). An enraged black community might destroy rather than continue in despair.

Similarly, Sethe's response to Schoolteacher's appearance reflects hopelessness and despair. When Schoolteacher finds Sethe, she has tasted freedom and refuses to return to his subjugation. Sethe's actions when she "recognized Schoolteacher's hat" (Morrison 163) may be difficult to accept, but they fit into the same pattern that found blacks burning down their own communities in the 1960s rather than to continue feeling oppressed.

> And if she thought anything, it was No. No. Nono. Nonono. Simple. She just flew. Collected every bit of life she had made, all the parts of her that were precious and fine and beautiful, and carried, pushed, dragged them through the veil, out away, over there where no one could hurt them. Over there, Outside this place, where they would be safe. (163)

Sethe's intent is to commit suicide. "I wouldn't draw breath without my children. " ... My plan was to take us all to the other side, where my own ma'am is" (203). She explains that she kills Beloved to keep her safe. "How if I hadn't killed her she would have died and that is something I could not bear to happen to her" (200). Even Stamp Paid recognizes that Sethe's actions are motivated by a mother's love which acknowledges that there are some things worse than death. Sethe explains to Paul D that "It ain't my job to know what's worse [then Sweet Home and Schoolteacher]. It's my job to know what is and to keep them away from what I know is terrible. I did that" (165). Sethe's actions are spontaneous reactions much as the riots after Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination. Hopelessness fueled by an absence of choices and the need to "survive" slavery direct Sethe much as similar motivation dictated the actions of the rioters. The answer to the nephew's question, "What she want to go and do that for?" (150) is that both Sethe and the rioters understand it is better to self-destruct than to continue under cultural or economic deprivation. Additionally, Sethe's actions destroys Schoolteacher's property and "outhurt[s] the hurter" (234) in much the same way that burned buildings in black neighborhoods deprived absentee white landlords of property during the riots of the 1960s.

The book *Black Rage* indicates that despite the self-destructive element among American blacks, they are, nonetheless, survivors, just like Sethe. The closing pages of this book state that "As grief lifts . . . the hatred he had turned on himself is redirected toward his tormentors, and the fury of his attacks . . . is in direct proportion to the depth of his grief" (Grier 209). *Black Rage* addresses what it sees as an inevitable "transformation . . . of grief into aggression" (210) into a "black rage, apocalyptic and final" (210). In this light, Sethe's second attack on Mr. Bodwin may play a prophetic role. No longer feeling helpless but still full of violent memories, she turns her attack outward towards the man in the hat.

> It is when she lowers her eyes to look again at the loving faces before her that she sees him . . . his black hat wide-brimmed enough to hide his face but not his purpose. He is coming into her yard and he is coming for her best thing. . . . And if she thinks anything it is no. No no. Nonono. She flies. The ice pick is not in her hand; it is her hand. (Morrison 262)

Similarly, the Los Angeles riot of 1992, although spontaneous and random, is not contained within the black community. Perhaps more revealing is that hand-lettered signs proclaiming black ownership attempted to save some businesses from the destruction (Ellis 26). Here, again, the lesson was that violent dissent, although shocking, gets an immediate response in the form of economic aid and programs to encourage public awareness about the continued existence of racial problems. For people who are oppressed and have lost hope, this immediate attention makes increasingly violent dissent appear attractive.

For many readers, the passive dissent of Baby Suggs is more acceptable than the active dissent of Sethe. We can see the ethical nature of Christian-based civil disobedience as practiced by Baby Suggs and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sethe's actions fit our criteria for active dissent in that they are indeed illegal, violent, shocking, and they call attention to inequities in the system. Edward Bodwin in remembering his days of active dissent recalls how "The society managed to turn infanticide and cry of savagery around and [built] a further case for abolishing slavery." Like many of the characters in the story, readers find it difficult to perceive any sense of ethics in Sethe's actions. Ella "understood Sethe's rage in the shed twenty years ago, but not her reaction to it . . . " (256). However, the fact that Sethe is denied choice by society absolves her of guilt in my mind. Further, the fact that she was resisting being drawn back into the system of slavery that is inherently unethical helps put her on the side of right. To the extent that Sethe's actions call attention to the inequities of the system and promote positive changes in the definition of citizenship then her actions are ethical. Her attack on Edward Bodwin may be more prophetic than ethical but is to me, understandable. Sethe, Baby Suggs, and their historical counterparts are outcasts and as such have been denied the rights of citizenship. I believe that the outcast is ethically obliged to engage in dissent in whatever available manner seems necessary to call attention to the inequities of the society in which they reside. Hopefully this dissent will change the definition and rights of citizenship to include Sethe, Baby Suggs and all other outcasts.

Kathryn Dierksen

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Nobody Stopped Playing Checkers

How a person defines himself and achieves his identity is usually based on his relationships to others: I am Gerry's daughter, Kathie's sister, Kimberly's aunt, etc. What would happen to an individual who is not allowed to cultivate these relationships? What becomes of someone who has no sense of family or self? What happens to someone's self perception when their very humanity is denied by others? This lack of connections or "identity crisis" was a very real situation for slaves in the United States. Frederick Douglass, in his autobiography, says,

> The reader must not expect me to say much of my family. Genealogical trees did not flourish among slaves . . . Of my father I know nothing. Slavery had no recognition of fathers, as none of families. That the mother was a slave was enough for its deadly purpose. By its law, the child followed the condition of the mother. (29)

Douglass goes on to tell of how early in his life he

> began to learn the sad fact that this house of my childhood belonged not to my dear old grandmother, but to someone I had never seen and who lived a great distance off. I learned, too, the sadder fact, that not only the home and lot, but that grandmother herself and all the little children around belonged to a mysterious personage. (30)

As with Douglass, all slaves' understanding of themselves was shaped by the fact that their families and selves were property. White society, to ensure the continuation of slavery, removed all perceived threats to the institution. Close slave families and strong individual identifications are examples of threats. So, as Douglass says, slavery always sought to "reduce man to a level with the brute" (28).

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* shows, through the life of the character Sethe, how slaves were denied an identity. Because she is forbidden other roles, she assumes her identity as a mother. When she feels her children (her "best thing") (25) are threatened, she reacts to protect them. Ironically, it is this action to protect her humanity that results in Sethe being set apart from her family, community, and ultimately, humanity.

There are myriad examples given in *Beloved* of Sethe's being denied the encounters and interactions with family and community that would have allowed her development of a "healthy" self. Early in the book, we are allowed to see Sethe's lack of parental role models. She is told stories about her mother; she has little personal recollection of her. She does not even know who her mother is until another slave "pointed out as the one among many backs turned away from her, stooping in a watery field" (30). Sethe is told how she was special—that her mother threw many of her brothers and sisters away nameless but saved her (62).

In addition to this gap, Sethe also is forbidden a sense of custom or ceremony. One great example is on her "wedding day." Sethe and Halle decide to marry. Sethe goes to the master's wife and announces this. Mrs. Garner replies, in essence, "O.K., you are married." This is unsatisfactory to Sethe, as it would be to most people. She wants some formal moment or ceremony, that is recognized by others, to document the commitment, the change of status. She wants to officially become wife. When Sethe persists in asking,

> "Is there a wedding?" Mrs. Garner put down her cooking spoon. Laughing a little, she touched Sethe on the head, saying, "You are one sweet child." And then no more. (26)

So, as Sethe was denied the opportunity to be daughter, she was also denied the opportunity to be wife.

There are many other experiences withheld from Sethe that shape her personality. These include female friendships, the sharing with the community, and the celebration of events such as courtships and births. For all slaves, the most important thing withheld was security for one's self and one's loved ones. Morrison, describing this situation in Baby Sugg's life, says

> Men and women were moved around like checkers. Anybody Baby Suggs knew, let alone loved, who hadn't run off or been hanged, got rented out, bought up, brought back, stored up, mortgaged out, won, stolen or seized. What she called the nastiness of life was the shock she received upon learning that nobody stopped playing checkers just because the pieces included her children. (23)

Knowing this "nastiness of life" and being denied all other roles, when Sethe has her children she latches on strongly to the role of mother. With no real example of motherhood, Sethe must create in her own mind what the proper actions of a good parent are. Her conclusion is that she must protect her children—regardless of what means are necessary or what consequences will follow. This blind attitude, though understandable even by the other former slaves in the community, leads them to view Sethe's action as abhorrent.

We see Sethe's view of mothering and motherhood throughout the book.

Sethe's importance to herself is only as someone's mother. She cannot control her own lack of a mother, schoolteacher's action, the nephews' actions, or Halle's going insane. Motherhood is the only realm where Sethe feels any degree of empowerment. When she is escaping, she thinks "I believe this baby's ma'am is gonna die in wild onions on the bloody side of the Ohio River" (31). When Sethe is describing to Paul D her encounter with the nephews of schoolteacher, he keeps asking questions about what they did to her. Her attitude seems to be—"Forget me! Think about how that experience could have affected my children!"

> "I had milk," she said. "I was pregnant with Denver but I had milk for my baby girl.
> [Paul D asks] "They used cowhide on you?"
> "And they took my milk."
> "They beat you and you was pregnant?"
> "And they took my milk!" (16, 17)

The milk was essential to the survival of her two babies. So what affected her most was not the assault on herself but the possibility that in taking the milk, the nephews not only harmed her children but also robbed her of control over their very survival. The image that emerges of Sethe is that she will tolerate most anything personally but will absolutely not tolerate any threat to her children.

This posture is again seen in an argument between Paul D and Sethe over Denver's behavior:

> Risky, thought Paul D, very risky. For a used-to-be-slave woman to love anything that much was dangerous, especially if it was her children she had settled on to love. The best thing, he knew, was to love just a little bit; everything, just a little bit, so when they broke its back, or shoved it in a croaker sack, well, maybe you'd have a little love left over for the next one. (45)

As the discourse progresses, Paul D asks how she will ever protect her child once Sethe has died. She replies, "I'll protect her while I'm alive and I'll protect her when I ain't . . . That's the way it is, Paul D. I can't explain it to you no better than that, but that's the way it is. If I have to choose-well, it's not even a choice" (45). Again, Sethe exhibits the willingness to deny herself (even the love of a man) if she is forced to pick between herself and her kids.

The tragic conclusion to Sethe's undying devotion for, and absolute duty to, her children is her attempt to kill them. She saw the schoolteacher coming for her and her children and decided, regardless of the price of her action he would not get them.

Though she has survived the horrors of slavery, the children would not be subjected to them. It was her duty as their protector to use any means to keep them safe. Eighteen years after she has murdered her "crawling-already? baby," Sethe is afraid that Beloved will leave before she can adequately explain. Sethe fears,

> Beloved might leave. Leave before Sethe could make her realize that worse than that-far worse—was what Baby Suggs died of . . . That anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself anymore. Dirty you so bad you forgot who you were and couldn't think it up. (251)

In Sethe's eyes, killing her children (or trying to) was the ultimate act of parental love and protection. She describes the act as the "perfect death of her crawling-already? baby" (99). As Stamp Paid said, "She ain't crazy. She love those children. She was trying to out-hurt the hurter" (234).

The hardest consequence Sethe must face is ostracism from her own community. It is her lack of power and "outsideness" from American society that leads to the murder, and "outsideness" from her own family and community is the result of the murder. Her two sons run away. Her mother-in-law simply gives up and dies. Her remaining daughter does not speak for two years and then is ambivalent towards Sethe—Denver loves Sethe but is afraid that whatever caused her mother to kill her sister might happen again causing her mother to kill her. Even her lover leaves her when he is told of her crime. The community as a whole shuns Sethe and, consequently, Denver and Baby Suggs as well. "A driver whipped his horse into the gallop local people felt necessary when they passed 124" (4). When Paul D arrives Denver is amazed because "For 12 years . . . there had been no visitors of any sort and certainly no friends. No colored people" (12). Even Stamp Paid, in many ways the most charitable and forgiving member of the community, "had stepped foot in this house only once after the Misery" (171).

Sethe learned a hard lesson. Denied the experiences of daughter, sister, wife, and friend, she viewed herself solely as mother. While others thought her mother love "too thick" (164), she believed "love is or it ain't" (164). A mother either protects her children or her "love ain't." The tragedy that she learned was that "definitions belonged to the definers—not the defined" (190). Society had defined her a "throw away person" (84) and her response to that definition made her a "throw away" person to the very humanity she strove to protect.

Teri Holmes

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The Alienation Factor: Displacement Leading to Violence in *Beloved*

Citizenship as defined in the ethical context of community is often regarded as a fundamental privilege for and a protection of those persons who occupy a specific geographical area and who adhere to a mutual set of principles. Even though people may occupy the territory and live by the rules, they are not always granted even the most basic human rights and are not afforded protection from the abuses of others whether fellow occupants or outside enemies. These disenfranchised individuals must exist in an environment which alienates them from any feeling of community. Such was the case for the Negro slaves on the plantations in the ante-bellum South. Female slaves "felt the weight of racial discrimination compounded by sexual prejudice" (Jones 3). "Because they could provide a continual supply of cheap labor but could, at the same time, negate the labor supply by attending to familial duties, black women actually inhabited a unique subculture, one not shared entirely by either black men or white women" which continued even after emancipation for those who were sharecroppers (5). Fictional literature also abounds with similarities to the type of alienation suffered by the female Negro slave. Race, violence, and disobedience have alienated many female characters. For these women, exile, torture, or execution often served as the punishment for violation of society's laws of defiance of accepted roles. If alienating factors are compounded society usually reacts with more severe and restrictive measures. In Toni Morrison's *Beloved,* the female protagonist Sethe suffered extreme alienation brought about primarily through displacement. These instances of displacement led to violence.

Sethe, the protagonist in *Beloved,* is faced with initial displacement by being a product of slave trade. Born to a slave in transit, Sethe is displaced from her African homeland. On arrival in the United States, she and countless others became the backbone of the plantation economy. Denied even basic recognition as a member of a family unit, Sethe, like other men and women, was subject to being "moved around like checkers . . . rented out, loaned out, bought up, bought back, stored up, mortgaged, won, stolen, or seized" (23). This denial of family identification was shown in Sethe's not remembering where she was born—"(Carolina maybe? or was it Louisiana?) she remembered only song and dance (30). Sethe's own mother had to be pointed out to her by an eight-year-old child who watched the young children in the field. Her mother never slept in the same cabin with Sethe most nights and was hanged for an unexplained reason while Sethe was still a small child. She was cared for by a woman called Nan who recalled for her some of the details of her (Sethe's) birth. Nan, whom Sethe's mother had known from the sea, told Sethe she was named after a black man, but her mother's children by white men were thrown away unnamed (62). Lacking even the basic knowledge of origin and identity displaced and alienated Sethe during the most important developmental years of human life. During the early formative years, a child develops those values and identities that serve as the foundation for later life.

Although denied adequate connection with her biological mother, Sethe received nurturing from Nan, who served as her model of interaction, caretaking, and nurturing. At the age of fourteen Sethe lived on the Garner farm, called Sweet Home, in Kentucky. There she and other slaves enjoyed a special kind of slavery—a kind that treated them like paid labor, listened to what they had to say, and taught what they wanted know (140). Unlike Baby Suggs, Sethe's mother-in-law, Sethe had "the amazing luck of six whole years of marriage to that 'somebody' son who had fathered every one of her children"(23). Marriage for Sethe consisted of permission to be husband and wife; there was no ceremony, no confirmation of vows before God and man. Sethe's "marriage," however, was an exception. Few slaves enjoyed any kind of marriage, especially a marriage to another Negro. This marriage and the children resulting from it provided Sethe with a special and gratifying role, one that fulfilled her maternal instincts. Protected by the boundaries of sweet Home, Sethe enjoyed the freedom to provide physical, psychological, and spiritual nourishment to others; she had achieved a degree of self-actualization previously unknown. Unfortunately, neither life at Sweet Home, marriage to Halle, nor motherhood could remain secure for long. "All slaves knew that one step off that ground and they were trespassers among the human race" (125). Sethe, however, had pushed to the unconscious level the fact that she could be separated from her children. Not until Halle mentioned that they must make a move to escape while the boys were still young did Sethe realize that her children would become the chattel of a slave economy (197).

Realization of the fragile status of her life came to Sethe when Mr. Garner died. Upon Mr. Garner's death, his brother, known only as "schoolteacher," came with two boys run to the farm. Without hesitation, schoolteacher subjected the slaves to abusive cruelty. Previously unknown pain and horror would begin to eat away at the strongest archetype of Sethe's psyche: the role of mother. Cognizance of this potential, compounded by cultural displacement, shadowy birth history, and cruelty severed parental connections, created a life dangerously unbalanced. Realizing that a 'buy out' of slavery, such as Halle had arranged for his mother, would not be possible, Sethe end other slaves planned an escape. Unfortunately, the plan did not work out as expected. Sethe, who was pregnant at the time of the escape, was able to get her children safely to the corn field, but returned to find Halle when he did not arrive at the expected time. On her return to the farm, she discovered "Sixo was burned up and Paul D dressed in a collar you wouldn't believe" (197-198).

This tragedy was compounded by personal degradation for Sethe, who was discovered by the schoolteacher and his three boys. According to Sethe, " . . . they handled me like I was the cow, no, the goat, back behind the stable because it was too nasty to stay with the horses" (200). Not only was this action personally humiliating for Sethe as a woman, but it also deprived her of her role as mother and nurturer of her child. Sethe's maternal persistence would become one of her strongest motivations. The memory of this robbery of her potential to nurture haunted Sethe throughout her later life and seemed more psychologically shattering than the beating of her pregnant body. Her memory of being beaten was poignantly straight forward.

> Bit a piece of my tongue when they opened my back. It was hanging by a shred I didn't mean to. Clamped down on it, it came right off. I thought. Good God, I'm going to eat myself up They dug a hole for my stomach so as not to hurt the baby. (2O2)

Dispossession of her mother's milk would also lead to Sethe's displacement as a wife. Unknown to Sethe, Halle had witnessed the "milking." Apparently unable to withstand the trauma of Sethe's defilement or to accept "hiding close by looking down on what I couldn't look at . . . And not stopping them—looking and letting it happen" (70), Halle became dysfunctional. Sethe learned of Halle's experience and its debilitating effect when Paul D told her that he had found Halle "squatting by the churn smothering the butter as well as the clabber all over his face because the milk they took is on his mind" (70). Hearing this explanation of why Halle never joined her and the children, Sethe wondered why she could not let go of the past or go crazy: "Other people went crazy, why couldn't she? Other people's brains stopped, turned around and went on to something new, which is what must have happened to Halle" (70). Psychologically, Sethe's psyche had suffered enough devastating blows to seriously warp if not destroy it at this point. However she was not destroyed at this point because she had not irrevocably lost her maternal instinct.

Sethe was able to enjoy twenty-eight days of freedom before her final displacement occurred. Freedom, however, did not come easily. Realizing her children were orphaned without her, Sethe struggled to reunite what was left of her family. Stubbornness, patience, and perseverance became her sustaining qualities. During her escape, Sethe's feet became badly swollen and numb. Unable to walk, Sethe crawled until her knees were as bloody as her back which had been whipped. With the aid of a stranger named Amy, Sethe gave birth to Denver in a boat. Sethe thought "A pateroller passing would have sniggered to see two throw-away people, two lawless outlaws, a slave and a barefoot whitewoman with unpinned hair—wrapping a ten-minute-old baby in the rags they wore" (84-85) Finally, Sethe reached the safety of Baby Suggs' home—"all mashed up and split open, but with another grandchild in her arms" (135). In less than a month, Sethe's security was shattered by the arrival of "four horsemen, schoolteacher, one nephew, one slave catcher and a sheriff" (148). Realizing that her children would be taken from her and returned to a dehumanizing life, Sethe attempted to free them all from any possible harm by ending their lives, "Two boys bleeding in the sawdust and dirt at the feet of a nigger woman holding a blood-soaked child to her chest with one hand and an infant by the heels in the other" (149) In defense of her actions, Sethe explained that she:

> "couldn't let her [Beloved, her daughter] nor any of em live under schoolteacher [but rather c]ollected every bit of life she had made, all the parts of her that were precious and fine and beautiful, and carried, pushed, dragged them through the veil out, away, over there where no one could hurt them." (163)

Women with strong mothering instincts like Sethe's usually respond to any threat to or loss of ability in this area with depression or aggression Sethe, in regard to maternal instinct, typifies the Demeter ("mother") character. She, like Demeter, can threaten to destroy mankind. Sethe will protect her "Persephone" with aggression. To orphan her children again or to return them to a life worse than death was not something Sethe was willing to do. When faced with the possibility of surrendering her children to slavery, Sethe, like Demeter, created her own form of famine, one that would deny the schoolteacher the harvest of her seed. This was not a premeditated act, it was an instinctual protective reflex similar to the animal that will chew off its foot to get out of a trap. "And if she thought anything it was No . . . She just flew . . . Over there. Outside this place, where they would be safe" (163). Later when her daughter returned as a ghost, she knew she could make her understand that

> anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself anymore. Dirty you so bad you forgot who you were and couldn't think it up. And though she and others lived through and got over it, she could never let it happen to her own. (251).

Sethe would not allow anyone to dirty "her best thing, her beautiful, magical best thing—the part of her that was clean" (251). Her children were that best and clean part of herself, and she refused to subject them to what she had endured even if that meant taking their lives.

For Sethe, society presented so alien an environment that violence was deemed the only preventive of further degradation and displacement. Historically, men and women have found themselves in environments so demoralizing and abusive that violence seemed the most potentially effective release. Although the state should establish the protection and its citizens should extend the mercy necessary for human dignity to flourish, often neither states nor citizens exercise their obligations. Proof of this lack of assuming responsibility has been seen in the existence of slavery, the perpetuation of sweat shops in industry, the use of child labor and abuse, and the denial of equal protection under the law. All of these practices were often permitted under a political organizational structure which advocated civil rights and professed enforcement. Not surprisingly, violence erupted when the weight of alienating factors became so oppressive that death and destruction were more comforting than the abusive environment. Although society has endured extreme hardship to maintain a sense of peace, even an unsatisfactory peace, and the violent individual has been looked upon as an exception, violence against self, loved ones, and society has erupted frequently. According to Henry Paolucci, St. Augustine believed that:

> Conflicts occur; the strong overcome the weak, and the vanquished "preferring any sort of peace and safety to freedom itself," readily submit unconditionally to the victors. This is so usual . . . that, in all parts of the world, men who choose to die rather than be slaves have been greatly wondered at (xii).

Such violent events as the French Revolution, the American Revolution, the civil rights movements of the 1960s, the Los Angeles riots of 1992, and the current upheaval in the Soviet republics have served as graphic evidence of the violent rejection of subjugation and abuse. Whether the citizen should endure an oppressive environment or take hostile action against it—that raises many ethical questions. Ironically, societal alienation of the individual can cause that individual to resort to violence, but it is mutual alienation of self without any reserve that can develop the condition of ethical association. This is the basic premise of Rousseau's social compact. "Each of us places in common his person and all his power under the supreme direction of the general will; and as one body we all receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole" (15). Implementing and sustaining such a social compact when human beings with individual wills and desires are involved and when the general will becomes only the will of the strongest will never be easy. Such conditions remain the greatest obstacles to success and the principal reasons for violent reaction.

Millie Goode

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The Meaning of Life

As the debate over abortion rages on with no end in sight, I find myself uncomfortable with both sides of this moral and practical dilemma. Perhaps this dialogue represents how Antigone, Sethe, and Medea would carry on a conversation about abortion . . . Then again, maybe not.

Antigone (Pro-Life): If I believe in something, then I am obligated to stand up for what I believe in, no matter what.

Sethe (reluctantly Pro-Choice): I agree.

Antigone: I believe that protecting my family and fulfilling my responsibilities to my family is more important than even my own life. That is why I buried Polynices, even though it meant my own death.

Sethe: I agree, again.

Antigone: But certainly you don't agree. You killed your own child.

Sethe: That is true, I did kill my own child, even though I did love her so.

Antigone: Then you must agree that you did not protect her, and in fact did not fulfill your parental responsibility.

Sethe: That is simply not true. I did fulfill my responsibilities.

Antigone: But you killed her. Certainly there is nothing responsible about that.

Sethe: I drew her blood, but it was not I who took her life.

Antigone: How can that be? You already said that you killed her.

Sethe: True. I took away her physical life, but it was not I who took away her soul and her quality of life. My dear Beloved had no potential for any quality of life. Her life ended when she was born, began again when Stamp brought her over the river to freedom, and ended again when Schoolteacher rode up on his horse. I fulfilled my responsibility when I drew her blood and protected her from the horrors of slave life.

Antigone: Do you mean that life as a slave is worse than no life at all?

Sethe: That's right!

Antigone: But you aren't a slave any more. Surely, if she was alive today, she would have some quality to her life.

Sethe: Maybe, but Black folks still aren't treated right. Anyway, killing her keeps eatin' me up. I thought at the time that I was doin' the right thing but I sure have some regrets now. But I'll tell you, it isn't as simple as you make it out to be.

Medea (radical Pro-Choice): Oh, it's simple all right! I have the right to do whatever I want with my kids. They are from my body and certainly I have a right to control my own body. Especially when I have been wronged. How could I let them live with their stepmother? She would never love them like her own. There could be no quality of life for them with a stepmother.

Antigone: That is not true. If they were in my family, I would treat them like my own. Even if I adopted your kids, I would die for them. Surely you could have given them to someone for safe-keeping.

Medea: It is more expedient for me to kill them.

Sethe: But look at what you are both saying. Antigone, if you truly cared for the life of Medea's children, you would have intervened and adopted them yourself, or worked to help Medea from being banished from society in the first place. Certainly a banished woman fears for the life of her children. You say you would die for them, but you contradicted yourself when you said you would only die for Polynices. I think you are too extreme and hard-headed. Be reasonable and compromise.

Medea: Yeah, we should be able to have control over our own lives.

Sethe: True Medea to a degree, but you are being too extreme and hard-headed yourself. You can't just go around killing your children for your own selfish reasons. Certainly our society will eventually break down if everyone goes around killing their children. You should at least look for other alternatives.

Antigone: I agree, but you killed your child too, Sethe. What makes your situation different?

Sethe: I took my child's physical life because society had taken its potential for quality life. No one wants to adopt a Black child. You can criticize me; I myself am critical of my own actions. But what else was I supposed to do? Was my Beloved going to be just another unwanted second-class citizen in a hostile world? No way! I couldn't accept that. What you have is a terrible situation. And I . . . I reacted in the only way I knew how. But you don't see me telling people to just act for their own selfish reasons, and you don't see me judging people when I don't understand the problems that they must endure. Perhaps the three of us have a long way to go before we really understand each other. I hope it's not too long, though.

Medea: I agree with that.

Antigone: Me too.

Kevin Brown

Beloved: The Patchwork Quilt and Feminist History

Beloved by Toni Morrison is about the journey from slavery to freedom. But it is not only about a journey of escape from slavery; it is about a woman's—a mother's escape from guilt. The two are tied together. The book opens in 1873, where Sethe and Denver, her eighteen year old daughter, are the two isolated inhabitants left at 124 Bluestone Road, a house in Cincinnati, Ohio which had served as a safe house for runaway slaves in the years before the Civil War.

The story of Sethe and the other characters whose lives are intertwined with hers is not told in the clear-cut narrative or straight chronological manner we usually associate with history. It is a history, none the less, of what was experienced, felt and remembered by slaves during the period just before and after the Civil War. The focus is the women as mothers, daughters and grandmothers. Men do play important and pivotal roles and do have poignant stories, but their stories are told as they impinge upon or are involved with Sethe: it is she and her daughters around whom the whole drama revolves. The history, or the main episodes, radiate both backward and forward from the starting point in 1873. History is a misleading term—the story is not a history per se, but rather a recalling or remembering, as Sethe herself would term it, a "rememory," of the past. A patchwork quilt appears frequently in the book as an image of history—it is this image and how it is used to highlight structure and theme that I wish to investigate. The book is written in a style that comes close to the very process of rememory—recalling the past in bits and pieces—something like the patchwork quilt that appears at the start of the book, when Sethe recalls her dead mother-in-law, Baby Suggs:

> Her past had been like her present—intolerable—and since she knew death was anything but forgetfulness, she used the little energy left for pondering color." Bring a little lavender in, if you got any. Pink, if you don't." And Sethe would oblige her with anything from fabric to her own tongue. (4)

"Pondering color" is Baby Suggs' way of going over her life, and she does this by looking over the bits of fabric that she would use to make a patchwork quilt.

The quilt also shows how the story of the women's lives will be told. The story will be told by piecing together memories. It is these memories, told, passed on from mother to daughter, that will be the become the story, the oral history of black women as slaves. The quilt is not only an object, in the literal sense that binds characters together, but used figuratively to represent the process of how the story will be revealed. For Sethe memory is an living process which she tries to describe to her daughter, Denver:

> . . . You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down it's gone but the place-the picture of it- stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there in the world . . . even if I die, the picture of what I did or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened. (36)

Memories are to Sethe stronger than thought pictures. The memories, places and people have a life of their own that continues beyond death. The ghost of the dead baby, later Beloved, is just that—living memory, physically embodied. The quilt is a metaphor for this living memory and it will be used several times to recall or comment on the life of a character. The patchwork quilt aptly represents the life of a poor woman, thriftily saving scraps to sew in spare hours. With it, rough hands are constantly busy. The quilt is used here to sum up the life of Baby Suggs, Sethe's mother-in-law:

> "kneeling in the keeping room where she usually went to talk-think it was clear why Baby Suggs was so starved for color. There wasn't any except for two orange squares in a quilt that made the absence shout . . . and the dominating feature, the quilt over an iron cot, was made up of scraps of blue serge, black, brown and gray wool—he full range of the dark and the muted that thrift and modesty allowed. In that sober field, two patches of orange looked wild—like life in the raw. (38)

Sethe sums up her mother in-law, Baby Suggs' life by contemplating the patches on the quilt. Sethe then begins to think of her own life and of the gravestone of her dead daughter, Beloved. For eighteen years, Sethe and her surviving daughter, Denver, have kept to themselves, seeing no one, except the ghost of the baby who died eighteen years before at the infant age of nine months.

Paul D is a catalyst for change. His appearance revives the process of remembering. Here, too, the quilt is used to signal the beginning of recalling the horrendous past events that her isolation has permitted her to evade: "So kneeling in the keeping room the morning after Paul D came, she was distracted by the two orange squares that signaled how barren 124 really was" (39).

After Paul D exercises the baby ghost that has haunted the house, Beloved suddenly and strangely appears in the form of a nineteen year old, just the age she would have been if she had lived. Why Beloved appears after the return from the carnival may be that Paul D has claimed Sethe's affection. When Beloved moves in, Denver includes her in the storytelling, relating the story of her birth. The close bond between the two sisters as they lie on the bed, is registered:

> The dark quilt, with two orange patches was there with them because Beloved wanted it near her when she slept. It was smelling like grass and feeling like hands—the unrested hands of busy women: dry, warm, prickly. (78)

Here the quilt is a repository of the past and the connection of both to Baby Suggs, their grandmother. The claim of Beloved on her mother is stronger than her sisterly bond with Denver. She has been deprived of life by that same mother who gave birth to her. It is this deed that plagues Sethe with terrifying guilt, from which Beloved will and her to escape and Sethe will not allow herself to escape. The core experience, Sethe's murder of her children, must be relived not only by Sethe, but by those who witnessed the horrible events.

The moments immediately before are remembered such in a way that small details are imprinted so intensely in the memory that they seem etched there permanently. The repetition of details of the same event at different intervals imparts a haunting, almost mythic quality to the events. Baby Suggs recalls exactly where she and Sethe were when Schoolteacher appeared:

> She lifted her head and looked around. Behind her some yards to the left Sethe squatted in the pole beans. Her shoulders were distorted by the greased flannel under her dress to encourage the healing of her back. Near her was the three-week-old baby. Baby Suggs, holy, looked up. The sky was blue and clear. Not one touch of death in the definite green of the leaves. (138)

At a later point in the book, Sethe recalls that same moment:

> She was squatting in the garden when she saw them coming and recognized Schoolteacher's hat, she heard wings. Little humming-birds stuck their needle beaks right through her headcloth into her hair and beat their wings. (163)

Here the detail of the Sethe's squatting in the garden is repeated. The scene takes on a primal, almost mythic air with the image of birds circling her head. Beloved, at another further point in the book, becomes a participant in the same scene. Now the language becomes simpler, sentences are shorter and written in first person. Beloved is telling what she experienced at the time it occurred, but we are in the mind, as close as language will permit, of a nine month old infant:

> I am Beloved and she is mine. I see her take the flowers away from the leaves she puts them in a round basket the leaves are not for her she fills the basket she opens the grass I would help her but clouds are in the way... (210)

With bizarre, disjointed language, what might best be described as picture language, Morrison has reenacted the moment Sethe notices Schoolteacher's hat. She will then snatch her children and run to the shed, where with the saw left there by Stamp Paid, she will kill Beloved. The passage goes on to describe Beloved dying and joining her dead father. Halle: "his singing is the place where a woman takes flowers away from their leaves and puts them in a round basket" (211). The next chapter opens with the flowers that were being picked by Sethe in the three descriptions discussed above, now placed on a quilt:

> I am Beloved and she is mine. Sethe is the one that picked the flowers, yellow flowers in the place before the crouching. Take them away from green leaves. They are on the quilt now where we sleep. She was about to smile at me when the men without the skin came and took us up into the sunlight with the dead and shoved them into the sea. (214)

Beloved has joined her ancestors, those Africans who perished during the Atlantic crossing and were thrown overboard. It was during this crossing that Sethe was conceived, for Nan had told Sethe that "her mother and Nan were together from the sea" (62). Here the quilt seems to be almost an icon, one that contains a record of family suffering, history and death. Because the language is so abstract, the way this patch of flowers came to signify Beloved's death is mysterious. Since there would be no written record of these interconnected events, the quilt remains as their only tangible record.

It is, I think, noteworthy to point out how small details repeat almost as a refrain at different points in the book, so that these details, like the yellow flowers and green leaves, become poetically associated to a past experience. At the end of the book, when the women of the community help exorcise the spirit of Beloved, which has taken the form of a pregnant woman, we know how this second departure of Beloved brings her first death back to Sethe: "Sethe feels her eyes burn and it may have been to keep them clear that she looks up. The sky is blue and clear. Not one touch of death in the definite green of the leaves" (261). We recall that this was the same ironic description Baby Suggs used in her recollection of Sethe picking flowers, when Schoolteacher arrives. In the same way as green leaves are associated with death, the flowered patch on the quilt becomes the symbol for the unwritten oral tradition of rememory.

Throughout *Beloved*, the patchwork quilt has served as an image to record important relationships between sisters, mothers, grandmothers, the living and the dead. Because *Beloved* is essentially a woman-centered story, the quilt serves well as a recurring metaphor. In addition, images of fabric and sewing are frequently used to associate an event with something feminine and tangible. When Sethe delivers Denver after her daring escape, with the help of the poor white girl, Amy, Amy's hopes and dreams are summed up in her desire to get some velvet (33). At Sweet Home, when Sethe marries Halle she creates a wedding dress out of scraps:

> Well, I made up my mind to have at the least a dress that wasn't the sacking I worked in. So I took to stealing fabric, and wound up with a dress you wouldn't believe. The top was from two pillow cases in her mending basket. The front of the skirt was a dresser scarf a candle fell on and burned a hole in, and one of her old sashes we used a flatiron on. (59)

Sethe must keeping taking the dress apart to replace the purloined items. She finally completes the back of the dress from a jelly-stained piece of mosquito netting. This is the best wedding dress that the fourteen year old slave girl can manage, and this, to me, is an expression of Sethe's positive spirit in the face of deprivation.

There is a touching reference to fabric that Sethe recalls, after the murder. A piece of cloth left behind becomes a heartbreakingly poignant remembrance to her murdered baby:

> But I been wanting to make a shift for my baby girl with it. Had the prettiest colors ... For the longest time I been meaning to make it for her and do you know like a fool I left it behind? ... So when I got here, even before they let me out of bed, I stitched her a little something from a piece of cloth Baby Suggs had. Well, all I'm saying is that's a selfish pleasure I never had before. I couldn't let all that go back to where it was, and I couldn't let her nor any of them live under Schoolteacher. That was out. (163)

Free of slavery, even in so small a way as sewing a baby 's garment, Sethe could freely express her love for her child. This freedom she has had for just twenty-eight days (a full menstrual cycle), and with it came the joy of motherhood and the self respect she could never have had as a slave. That a mother would kill what she loved most rather than return to slavery is the ultimate indictment of so inhumane an institution. Sethe has had to pay by becoming a pariah three times removed, female, black and a murderess, and that has been her private war. The other war, the Civil War, is given little attention in the book. "The war had been over four or five years, but no one white or black seems to know it" (52), we are told.

Beloved is a powerful recreation of the era of slavery. We learn much about the everyday existence of slaves. It reaches us is on a level no traditionally written history could. However, I do consider *Beloved* a history for two reasons. First, the core story of the murder is based on the authentic case of a runaway slave, Margaret Garner, who was tried for killing her children (Samuels 9). The case became a celebrated cause for abolitionists, as the book itself relates. Second, the graphic details of how slaves were punished seem to be based on careful research. Here, for example, is the description of how the nine month pregnant Sethe is whipped:

> Bit a piece of tongue off when they opened my back . . . They dug a hole for my stomach so as not to hurt the baby. Denver don't like me to talk about it. (202)

A strikingly similar description is found in Jacqueline Jones' *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow:*

> One particular method of whipping pregnant slaves was used throughout the South: "they were made to lie face down in a specially dug depression in the ground," a practice that provided simultaneously for the protection of the fetus and the abuse of its mother. (20)

Toni Morrison has not only created a feminist history but has created a heroine of mythic proportions. In Sethe, we do not have a submissive, goodhearted mammy; nor do we have a Medea who would kill for revenge, but a woman of enormous inner strength.

Morrison, I think, believes that the oral history of slave women could have been forgotten. "It is not a story to pass on,"(278). Ironically, her book makes sure it will "pass on." Certainly, her book establishes the value of the oral mode, or storytelling as a form of feminist history. Yet, another question arises: Is there another view of history and how is this expressed in *Beloved*? The other history, the white male history which, I believe, Morrison embodied in Schoolteacher, is treated with scorn, and this is can be seen when the foolish teachings of Schoolteacher are described by Sethe: "Schoolteacher was teaching us things we couldn't learn. I don't care nothing for measuring string. We all laughed about that" (191). Schoolteacher always had his books and was frequently engaged in writing, hence his name. But the activities that he described as a so called objective witness are horrifying: "I am full God damn it of two boys with mossy teeth, one sucking on my breast them other holding me down, their book-reading teacher watching and writing it up" (70). One of the infamous class assignments Schoolteacher gives his nephews is to make a chart with Sethe's animal characteristics on one side and her human characteristics on the other (193). Disgusted and ashamed at being grouped with animals, she steals away. Add to the indignities of schoolteacher this assessment at the end of the book, when Denver announces she might attend Oberlin, "Nothing in the world more dangerous than a white schoolteacher" (266). I believe, in these references to Schoolteacher and the schoolteacher, there is an attack on the traditional white male view of history. Because that traditional history has given such little attention to the lives of women, not to mention slave women, we owe our thanks to Toni Morrison, of whom, as of Sethe, we can say: "it is they who made fine ink" (149).

Cynthia Walling

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Outside the Outside: A Comparison of Walker's Maggie and Morrison's Denver

Within any community are varying levels of inclusion. One of the major efforts in the growth of the individual is to find one's place within the community. The effort, however, becomes more acute when the individual is excluded from a community which is itself excluded. In such a position do we find Alice Walker's Maggie Johnson, of "Everyday Use," and Toni Morrison's Denver, of *Beloved*. In situation the girls are similar: they are the last female children of what are, at the time of the story, single black women. In addition, both live "in the shadow" of an absent older sister; in the case of Denver, of course, a dead one. Both are raised on the margins of the margin in terms of society as a whole, and both suffer serious emotional (and in Maggie's case, physical) scars. The question for both these characters must be how to achieve inclusion, how to avoid being so estranged for so long that one becomes a caricature, like so many we see in communities all over the world. The reader, in turn, must determine what catalysts are used to bring about inclusion, and whether they are effective.

Denver, at 124, lives in a haunted house that is rarely visited by anyone. It is the site of what once was the community's focal point and what subsequently became its object of horror. Until the book nears its end, we know of only one of Denver's efforts to escape its confines in any socially meaningful way. When at the age of seven, Denver seeks and finds the "company of her peers" for "almost a whole year" (102). She does not notice that she is "being avoided by her classmates" and that "they made excuses and altered their pace not to walk with her" (102). Not until Nelson Lord asks his two-fold question does she understand that society's door has been slammed shut long before she knew enough to try to open it, by powers far beyond her control or responsibility: "Didn't your mother get locked away for murder? Wasn't you in there with her when she went?" (104). For two years thereafter Denver is deaf by trauma. And not until she hears Beloved banging up the stairs does she hear another sound (103). Even at this juncture Denver must divide her accomplishment with her sister, a ghost. "What to jump on first was the problem: that Denver heard anything at all or that the crawling-already? baby girl was still at it but more so" (103).

Maggie's isolation seems not to be so purely emotional, but it is equally profound. She lives in a three-room house with a tin roof and portholes for windows. It has been ten or twelve years, at the time of the story, since their former house, which was just like it but with a shingle roof, burned down, with Maggie in it. Mama Johnson says, "Sometimes I can still hear the flames and feel Maggie's arms sticking to me, her hair smoking and her dress falling off her in little black papery flakes" (49). Maggie's awkwardness, then, is not only due to some emotional/social backwardness, but also due to a physical defect. When combined with what appears to be a near-poverty level existence and a mother who only has a second-grade education (50), Maggie's self-esteem is so low that Mama Johnson forecasts Maggie's reaction to her sister's arrival as follows: "She will stand hopelessly in corners, homely and ashamed of the burn scars down her arms and legs, eyeing her sister with a mixture of envy and awe" (47). And as this quote points out, the sister, in both these cases, exacerbates the problem.

Dee and Beloved share a common demand for and reception of the best their mothers can offer, to the detriment, in both cases, of the younger sister. Of Beloved, Morrison says:

> She took the best of everything—first. The best chair, the biggest piece, the prettiest plate, the brightest ribbon for her hair, and the more she took, the more Sethe began to talk, explain, describe how much she had suffered, been through, for her children, waving away flies in grape arbors, crawling on her knees to a lean-to. (241)

And earlier she declares that Beloved "never got enough of anything: lullabies, new stitches, the bottom of the cake bowl, the top of the milk. If the hen had only two eggs, she got both" (240). In the same chapter, as Denver realizes she will have to do something about the unhealthy situation at 124, she recounts that she had at first joined in the play that the three of them enjoyed briefly but that once Sethe had seen Beloved's scar—"the little curved shadow of a smile in the kootchy-kootchy-coo place under her chin . . . the two of them cut Denver out of the games" (239).

Mama Johnson tells us, "Dee wanted nice things. A yellow organdy dress to wear to her graduation from high school; black pumps to match a green suit she'd made from an old suit somebody gave me" (50). Indeed, one of the ironies of Walker's well-crafted story is that Dee could have enjoyed little of her new-found status and reclaimed culture had it not been for the effort Mama Johnson and the community at large had put into her: "I used to think she hated Maggie, too. But that was before we raised the money, the church and me, to send her to Augusta to school" (50). And as in the case of Beloved, Dee uses her mother's very gifts as weapons against her:

> She used to read to us without pity; forcing words, lies, other folks' habits, whole lives upon us two, sitting trapped and ignorant underneath her voice . . . . Pressed us to her with the serious way she read, to shove us away at just the moment, like dimwits, we seemed about to understand. (50)

As the climax of "Everyday Use" approaches, Dee's avarice becomes unmistakable. She asks for (claims) the butter dish, the churn top, the dasher, and, finally, the two quilts (55-6). Similarly, Beloved begins to require more of Sethe than she can give: "And when Sethe ran out of things to give her, Beloved invented desire" (240). Denver watches "her mother go without—pick-eating around the edges of the table and stove: the hominy that stuck on the bottom, the crusts and rinds and peelings of things. Once she saw her run her longest finger deep in an empty jar before rinsing and putting it away" (240).

Even in the things they eat, we find the elder sisters greedy for the sweets. As their first house burns down, Dee's mother watches Dee "standing off under the sweet gum tree she used to dig gum out of" (49), while "Beloved . . . whined for sweets although she was getting bigger by the day," and Sethe's "forefinger and thumb" were as "thin as china silk and there wasn't a piece of clothing in the house that didn't sag on her" (230). By juxtaposing the hunger for gum and sweets against the destruction of the house and Sethe's starvation, the authors seem to tell us that these two have a craving desire for the sweet but insubstantial, apparently without regard for others' troubles.

These two marginal characters see and find inclusion in different ways. It becomes painfully clear to Denver that she must arrest the stupor into which the inhabitants of 124 are sinking. But Denver's thoughts make clear her extreme trepidation about entering society to seek help for her dying household: "So it was she who had to step off the edge of the world and die because if she didn't, they all would" (239). She realizes it is "on her," that she will "have to leave the yard; step off the edge of the world, leave the two behind and go ask somebody for help" (243). Are "dying" and "stepping off the edge of the world" merely a writer's hyperboles, or are these descriptions fair descriptions of how individuals like Denver and Maggie feel about what they have to do? Somehow human society continues to produce, by birth, circumstance, or both, members who define the most extreme borders of its capacity, creatures whose very existence calls all human community into question. What is it, if these are examples? In Denver's case, the peripheral existence is escaped only when the harshest ultimatum is offered: inclusion or death. Stamp Paid makes a plea to Ella for Paul D which should have been offered for Denver and Sethe much earlier: "Why? Why he have to ask? Can't nobody offer?" (186). But Denver, without help being offered, finds inclusion, and in so doing demonstrates the benefits to herself and society that inclusion usually precipitates. This model for incorporating the outsider is the most cruel and probably the one most likely to fail, as Denver did in her first foray into society—the disenfranchised acting on his/her own, either out of compulsion or extreme need. Walker's Maggie, however, shows an example which society must at least more earnestly try to adopt.

By the time of the action of "Everyday Use," Maggie has become the caricature of humanity such persons often become. Her mother describes her as follows: "Have you ever seen a lame animal, perhaps a dog run over by some careless person rich enough to own a car, sidle up to someone who is ignorant enough to be kind to him? That is the way my Maggie walks"(49). Her only hint of inclusion is that "she will marry John Thomas, but he "has mossy teeth in an earnest face" (50), hardly a description of an insider himself. In addition, at the climax of the story, Maggie tells her mother that Dee can have the quilts, "like somebody used to never winning anything, or having anything reserved for her" (58). Mama Johnson narrates:

> I looked at her hard. She had filled her bottom lip with checkerberry snuff and it gave her face a kind of dopey, hangdog look . . . She stood there with her scarred hands hidden in the folds of her skirt . . . This was Maggie's portion. This was the way she knew God to work. (58)

A little hope of inclusion and redemption is offered in Walker's last paragraph when Maggie smiles "a real smile" at the retreating Dee, not a "scared" one (59). Whatever Maggie does or becomes, she will remember this inclusion, this being bought back from the cliff's edge of human existence by the doubly symbolic gift of two quilts; and maybe because some part of her community (itself-peripheral) included her, she, like Denver, can venture toward some more meaningful existence in the human community.

Daniel Stevens

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L'Envoi

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From The Shadows

Ms. Penelope Du Right greeted the dawn with jubilation. Her lagging spirit had been lifted by new insight. She had recently been exposed to literary enlightenment and could not wait to share these jewels of wisdom with her classroom fledglings. Carefully, she dressed in her best. From head to toe she epitomized the professional pedagogue. Her genuine imitation lizard skin orthopedic oxfords were immaculately shined, her support hose glistened in the sunlight, and her double knit herringbone suit was spotless. Adjusting her designer trifocals and her coiffured bun, she set out to meet the challenges of the day with a martyr's devotion. When she arrived in the classroom, she greeted the future of the world with a warm and gracious "Good morning, class! Today, we are going to analyze the river as process in *The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn*." From the shadowy recesses of the classroom, came the voice of adolescent dissension: "What's you mean the river as process. The river ain't process; it's water plain and simple," demanded Chuck Cain.

"No, you don't understand. We are looking at the river as a continuous and evolving thing that is always becoming. It's a lot like life, an evolving dynamic from its origin," insisted Ms. Du Right.

"Just great! The river is a river, I tell you, a bunch of water between two banks. My life has never been a river unless you count the last hurricane; then my whole life was water. It ruined in Metallica collection."

"Let's move on and consider the idea of shadow and projection."

"Projector! Do you need a projector? I'll get it."

"Chuck, I didn't say PRO-JEC-TOR; I said PRO-JEC-TION."

"Yeah! I know. That's what a projector does—projection. Write me a pass. Hurry, what are we going to watch?"

"We're not going to watch anything. We are going to talk about how we often project onto others the fears or shadows within ourselves."

"I projected my fist into Bill's mouth this morning, does that count?" And ya know what? It'll be hard to see shadows today with these clouds."

"Just listen, Chuck. Maybe things will be come clear soon." Ms. Du Right was temporarily inclined to do what Chuck's name implied. To chuck Cain into the shadows of a river in process had a benevolent ring.

"I suppose if the river is clear."

"What did you say, Chuck?"

"If the river is clear enough, I guess I could project my shadow into it."

"C-H-U-C-K!!!!! will you please be quiet and let me continue."

"Can't, Penel', gotta run. That was the bell."

Dejected but eternally optimistic, Penelope Du Right marked a giant red X across her daily lesson plan. Removing her designer trifocals, she rubbed the pressure marks on the sides of her nose. At that very instant, the sun broke through the clouds, casting her shadow across the room.

Millie Goode

Bruce Mitty

His glance rested on a poster he had purchased his first year of teaching. The poster, now faded and worn, displayed a portrait of Emerson and the words *Carpe Diem.* Ten years ago, the phrase energized Bruce Mitty, but the years of uninterested students, the mountains of paperwork, the unsupportive administration, the over-emphasis on sports, the minuscule budget and salary, the parental non-involvement, the inept powers-that-be, and the general public's expectations without participation had jaded and faded his spirit. He heard the slamming of lockers in the hall and the cacophony of roving hordes of teenagers, and his mind drifted.

The cacophony of war was deafening. Musket fire crackled sharply; cannons exploded resoundingly leaving many without arms, legs, sight, or life. Men screamed in agony and fury. Smoke wafted across the battlefield, obscuring the crimsoned ground. From the midst of the smoke, an almost pristine blue-clad, gold-ornamented Colonel emerged on a brilliant white steed. Sword extended, he galloped toward a row of earthen cells which housed fifty slaves. He directed his sword towards a shaking Confederate.

"Remove these bars and unfetter their leg-irons!" the Colonel shouted.

"Yes, sir!" the fear-stricken soldier responded.

"Expedite it! These men have been enslaved and chained for the last time."

The bars were removed, and the shuffling of chained feet could be heard as the enslaved exited their confinement. Soon, each man had been completely unchained.

"Hear me, black men! You are free, courtesy of the Union Army, the United States of America, and myself, Colonel Bruce Mitty."

"But suh!" queried an ex-slave, "Where we go?"

"Reclaim your families, your lives, and your honor. You are free men. The shackles of slavery bind you no longer." exhorted Colonel Bruce Mitty, and he wheeled his horse and galloped back toward the fray.

"That white boy ain't got a clue, has he?" stated one very skeptical black man. "These chains is just a start, but there's mo . . . "Mr. Mitty, Mr. Mitty! You told me to come in for a makeup vocab. test this morning, but if you're busy, I'll take it tomorrow; or you could just give me a 100 and save us both some trouble. I won't tell anyone." a tall J.V. basketball player suggested.

"What? Oh yes . . . vocabulary test. Now, which test did you miss?" questioned Bruce

"Last week's, starting with the word libidinous, the only word I remember."

"Right! Go ahead and get out a sheet of paper."

"Can't I study a little first?"

"Say what?"

"I just need to look them over just a little."

"You don't understand the term make-up, do you?"

"I'll be ready in five minutes; you want me to pass don't you?"

"I'd like you to pass away." Bruce muttered under his breath, and then he drifted off again.

"Look Huck, I don't think it a good idea to board that riverboat."

" C'mon chicken. You cain't live your life sceered all the time."

"I'd rather live sceered then die daring!"

"C'mon Bruce, what would Tom do if he was here? He'd call it an adventure."

"You know, Huck, Tom's back home in his soft, down bed dreamin' of adventures he'll never live, but at least he'll live to dream them."

"You can hide your fear in the closet of excuses, but I'm goin' in."

Bruce's brain ping-ponged his emotions about briefly, and then he stammered excitedly, "Oh hell, why ask why? If I die on this adventure though, I'll see to it my ghost calls on yours and kicks its butt."

"Bruce, you don't know nothin, " Huck replied quietly as he skulked aboard, "Ghosts ain't got no butts."

The two boys slipped inside and explored surreptitiously until they overheard a group of men plotting a murder.

"I'm gonna kick that freshman's butt if he doesn't get out of my seat tomorrow morning." stated a junior football player who had just walked into class with a group of his buddies. "We've been sitting there for a year now, and no stupid freshman is going to take my seat."

Bruce, raised from his reverie, could not quell his disbelief at the junior's pettiness.

"A small mind clings fast to small things." Bruce whispered just loudly enough for the group to hear him.

They blankly gazed on him for just a moment. The junior jock shrugged his shoulders, turned and looked at the others, and said, "Whatever!" Then they all turned and walked out.

Bruce peered after them, shook his head in disgust over their stupidity, folded his arms on his desk, and lay his head down. His mind drifted . . .

"What ho! Valiant Moor, I have unearthed a scheme of diabolic intent which threatens you and your beautiful bride."

"What meanst thou, my noble servant Bruce."

"As you know well, I have as my station, the care of your home, and my love for you and Desdemona prods me to keep watchful eyes on all who are welcomed here."

"Of your loyalty and quality I am well aware, but upon what do your eyes look with suspicion?"

"Not a what, but a who, sir, and a who who's closest to my master's heart."

"Out with it man. Set on and leave no detail out."

"I have of late, sir, noted good and honest Iago, whom I know you regard most highly, skulking through the palace with mischief in his mind and malice in his heart."

"You suspect honest Iago of some malignity towards me? Upon your life, manifest the proof of it or throttle your tongue forever."

"Wise and valiant Moor, Iago has spun a gossamer web of deceit, and he has captured many a fly, you being the greatest."

"Your metaphor exists, but no proof is tangible."

"True sir, but I engage your mind to be receptive to a doubt. If you will consent, I will call together all the victims of Iago's perniciousness; when all the players are in place, you will have proof enough."

"Most noble Bruce, if indeed you see clearly and wisely, and can improve my vision, your loyalty shall be rewarded in abundance."

"Mr. Mitty, are there any bonus questions on this make up test? I need about five or six of them." questioned the J.V. basketballer.

"Bonus questions? You want bonus questions?" Bruce incredulously inquired.

"You want me to pass don't you?"

"Fine! You want a bonus question, answer this. What role does the outsider play in Twain's novel, *Huck Finn*?"

"C'mon Mr. M.! I mean a real question."

"Okay then, explain how Machiavelli might actually be a proponent of republics as opposed to oligarchies?"

"Say what? No, I mean a bonus question I can answer—something like, who has led the N.B.A. in scoring the last four years?"

"Why don't you just finish the vocabulary test."

"But I only know one answer. That's not fair! I should have more time to study."

Fair, thought Mitty. Fair indeed, and he drifted . . .

The young lawyer, one rather effeminate by nature and features, approached the Duke.

"Sir, my client, Monsieur Junior Varsity has entered into an egregiously unfair bond with the Jew, Master Bruce Shylock. The bond calls for Monsieur Junior to repay Master Shylock the sum of fifteen units of vocabulary words by a designated time, or pay the forfeiture—a pound of human flesh."

"Master Shylock," pleaded the Duke, "Have you no mercy? Are 15 units tantamount to a pound of flesh?"

"Most honorable, esteemed Duke. This young man and I entered into a contractual agreement, both knowing the full terms of the agreement, and he has defaulted his part of the contract. He has repaid one, only one of the 15 units he owes me. What precedent will be established if I don't hold him to his bond?"

"You do realize how important he is to our society? If you enact your demented, heartless revenge, our forces will be greatly weakened." spoke the young lawyer.

"Are you trying to usurp my rights?" asked Master Shylock.

"I can't deny what is given to you by law, however much I wish I could. I can only implore you to excavate your heart from the layers of crust which envelope it." replied the Duke.

"But wait," interjected the lawyer. "Before you exact your revenge, be forewarned that you take nothing but the amount called for in the bond. One pound of human flesh. Nothing less, nothing more, upon penalty of your life."

Master Shylock held the knife toward Monsieur Jr. Varsity, nervously glanced at the scales, and stated tersely, "Cowards die many time before their deaths; the brave never taste of death but once!"

And with these words he brandished the blade and brought it to rest upon Varsity's chest.

"Wait!" shouted the lawyer, removing her headdress and robe to reveal a cascade of auburn hair and a womanly figure of very proper proportions. "Maybe we can work something out?"

"Mr. Mitty, are you okay?" asked a very lovely young cheerleader. "You seem kinda out of it."

"Oh, right." responded Mitty, "I'm okay, just concentrating. What can I do for you Medea?"

"Oh Mr. Mitty, I won't be in class today," she said with a very sad and distraught face.

"Well, I'm sorry about that, but I am glad you are disturbed about missing my class."

"Missing class isn't a problem; I'd rather not be here anyway, but I just saw my boyfriend—you know Jason, the varsity quarterback—walking down the hall with the drill team captain—the slut. It makes me so mad!" And he could see the fire behind her teary eyes.

"Um, this may sound like a stupid question," Mitty presupposed, "but you aren't armed, are you?"

Mitty got no answer because just as he asked the question, the cheerleader saw Jason and the "slut" walking hand in hand through the courtyard, and she rocketed out the door in tempestuous fury.

"Now about this vocab. test, Mr. M. How about I come back in tomorrow for a make up?" asked Jr. Varsity.

"Do you know what corpulent possibility means?" Mitty asked wryly.

"Duh! If I knew that I could pass the test."

"Well, you don't, and you can't, so get out of my face." retorted Mitty gruffly, and he twisted the knife.

The 8:25 bell rang, and soon, all 32 of his first period students strolled in. Mitty sat at his desk perusing the vast differences among his students. He saw skinheads, geeks, ropers, jocks, nerds, brains, babes, new-wavers, blacks, whites, Mexicans, Asians, preps, ROTC's, and head bangers. He was amazed that with such diversity in styles, many of them shared a common apathy towards English.

The tardy bell rang and the flutter of activity receded to silence as the whole class began to stare in humored curiosity at Bruce, who was simply gazing intently on the faded poster at the front of the room. The class shifted their gaze between Bruce and the poster; then they began to mutter among themselves.

"I'm very happy to be a part of this NEH Institute at SWTS University, a school I hope to someday become a part of. I am honored that June asked me to speak to you. After having taught at Oxford for the last ten years, and prior to that two years at Harvard, three at Princeton, two at MIT, and four at Stanford, I am ecstatic to be here among high school teachers who aren't here for the monetary incentives, but who are here to edify themselves and in turn their students. I am honored to be in your presence."

"Excuse me, Dr. Mitty, but how can someone with your background, your education, your preeminence in the educational system look up to us?" questioned a befuddled English teacher from Conroe High School.

"My dear colleague, you have hit upon a marvelous question. True I have the initials before my name, and the honors which the initials confer. And true, I value my role in the system of higher education because we turn out the wonderful products like you and your peers, but unlike yours, my scope is limited. You touch the lives of virtually every American citizen directly. You are usually the last contact most Americans have with formal education. True, we in the universities may dictate educational philosophy, but you teachers in high school dictate the quality of life for most Americans."

"If you buy that, Mr. Mitty," asked another teacher," then why don't you teach in high school?"

"Because in my ivory tower, all I need is intelligence, but in your square, plain brick classrooms, the requirement is wisdom."

"Mr. Mitty, Mr. Mitty! Is there something in that poster we're suppose to see?" questioned one student bold enough to disturb Mitty's reverie.

Mitty read the words "Carpe Diem"; he surveyed the motley collection of students sitting in his classroom; he reflected on his reveries; then he stood up straight, and with a budding passion, like lava seeping through the cracks in the ground, intoned confidently, "Yeah! There's something there for you to see. Something for you to see, and live."

Carey Christenberry

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